

THE ADVENT

IX. No. 4

November 1952

*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



Subscription : Inland, Rupees Five; Foreign, Twelve Shillings Six Pence

Inland : Single Copy, Rupee One and Annas Eight

PUBLICATION OFFICE :— SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, GEORGE TOWN, MADRAS



The Advent

Change yourself if you wish to change the world. Let your inner transformation be the proof that a truth-consciousness can take possession of the material world and that the Divine's Unity can be manifested upon earth.

Organisations, however vast and complex they may be, can achieve nothing permanent, unless a new force, more divine and all-powerful, expresses itself through a perfected human instrument.

23-8-52

THE MOTHER

The ADVENT

November 1952

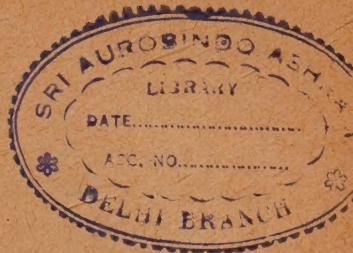
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Night is not our beginning nor our end;
She is the dark Mother in whose womb we have hid
Safe from too swift a waking to world-pain.
We came to her from a supernal light,
By light we live and to the light we go.

Savitri, BOOK X, CANTO I

SRI AUROBINDO



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIALS*

DIRECTED CHANGE

NEVER to be bound by the experiences of the past, never to try to recover and stick to the knowledge or realisation gained, even though it may appear particularly precious or unique. This is a motto you should always keep before your mind. When you try to repeat what you have once said, done or experienced, you are sure to find very soon that the thing is becoming more and more lifeless, mechanical, a matter of routine and therefore perfectly useless. The soul has disappeared, the skeleton remains. You must live the word you utter at the time of uttering it, you must live the experience that you wish to recall or express. It is only thus that truth becomes living, possesses its force and light and gains its full value.

In point of fact, however, no two succeeding moments, whether in your

* Based on Mother's Talks

consciousness or in the world movement, are exactly the same. Even if you try seriously and sincerely, you can never recapture a thing of the past as it was or as it came to you, not, that is to say, in the same exact manner. For you are no longer the same nor is the world. The world is a continuous flow, it has been very often declared: but it is not a continual repetition or recurrence, a mere cyclic order. On the other hand, constant renewal is the very character of the change. At every moment something new is coming down on the scene, something that was not: Nature is bringing out at every step something that was hidden or latent in her secret depth, something is thrown down from above into her normal movement, something unforeseen and unexpected. The march of time means evolution, that is to say, the addition of a new factor to the existing factors, making manifest something that was unmanifest—*mṛtam kancana bodhayanti*, as the Vedic Rishi says. Even if to an apparent sight everything seems to remain the same, yet it is not so in reality; always a new element is being poured into the existing circumstances, always an additional spark or influence enters into actual play of forces. It is the accumulated pressure of all the variables that brings about the great changes upon earth and in humanity which are summed up in the word evolution—changes cosmological and psychological.

You have to accept this principle of change and move on—to be one with the cosmic spirit, —never to stand still or turn back, but look forward and forge ahead. To be stagnant means to die and be fossilised. Now, if things change continually, it means things can change and must be changed. Only, one must see to the direction in which the change occurs. A change can be, after all, for better or for worse. And you have the power, if you are conscious with the right consciousness, to direct the change and even to initiate one of the right order. Have you ever climbed a hill? There are many ways, paths, issues leading towards the top, some more or less direct, some zig-zag, others winding or taking a long round. This does not matter, provided you look upward, have the sense of direction to the summit, then you mount up. Otherwise if you have your face downward or look below, you move downward away from the top. In the same way changes that happen will be directed according to the direction of your look. And there is only one direction towards which you must turn your look: towards the summit, towards the highest goal. It is to grow conscious, to grow more and more conscious—to be conscious of yourself, to be conscious of the universe and to be conscious of the Divine who dwells in you and permeates

VALUE OF GYMNASTICS, MENTAL OR OTHER

the world and then to manifest the Divine, in your physical life and in the physical life of the world.

VALUE OF GYMNASTICS, MENTAL OR OTHER

Intellectual activity is a kind of gymnastics. What is the value of physical gymnastics? It develops the muscles, makes them strong, supple and agile. But simply to develop them, to make them grow as much as possible or to take delight in mere muscle-binding a body is not the ideal; it rather frustrates the very object of gymnastics. The object is to develop, strengthen, shape all the limbs of the body and organise and harmonise them into a beautiful and capable whole. A particular exercise is not to be indulged for its own sake: all the energy of the body turned to that alone and the whole attention devoted to that one thing. An exclusive concentration upon a single physical feat does not bring out the full capacity of the body. It is to that end, the fullness of the body potential, that the culture of the bodily limbs is to be directed. In the same way, mental culture—the power of thinking, reasoning, arguing—has its value in its relation to the total culture of the mind and consciousness. There are higher regions of consciousness beyond the reach of the intellect; and you have to stop all intellectual activity, make your mind a total blank before you can hope to reach there. And indulgence even in so-called higher or philosophical speculations can only block the way to the true consciousness and knowledge. And yet you cannot leave the intellectual faculties uncared for or undeveloped on the plea that something higher is needed. In the physical body it need not be your ideal to become a “muscle man”; but neither would you like to have frail, ill-grown, rickety limbs that are weak and unshapely. With regard to your mental body too it would not serve any purpose to have a mind or intellect that is unable to think powerfully, cogently, closely. It is harmful when you take to mental gymnastics only for its own sake, to exclusive intellectual acrobatics—discussions, disputations, verbal quibbles etc., etc.; in that case the result attained is a disproportionate growth. But the development of the mind, even of the logical mind, can be and must be made part of the integral development, it must attain its true form, stature and strength, as a help towards and finally as an expression in its own field of the divinity, the highest and richest consciousness in man, even as the body too is to express and make concrete the supreme beauty and vigour of the perfect being.

THE ADVENT

MENTAL SILENCE

Normally the mind is in a turmoil; it is eagerly active. First of all it is preoccupied with its problems and wants their solution. It knows only to think, to see pros and cons, weigh, reason, deduce; it arrives at some kind of conclusion which brings success or failure almost at random. Apart from this conscious or voluntary activity there is in the mind a whole region of involuntary activity; that is to say, it is assailed on all sides by a hundred thoughts, ideas and notions that come from outside and fill your brain cavity and over which you have no control. Each one tries to push forward, secure a place for itself, claim satisfaction and fulfilment. They are all moving at cross purposes and the mind knows no peace or issue.

It is possible to put a violent pressure upon oneself and forcibly push out all this confused movement and make the mind vacant. But the effect of mental will upon mind cannot be perfect or enduring. Besides it is not that, the absolute vacancy, that is our goal. Some other way and manner has to be found for stilling the mind's activities.

It is to call in the peace that is beyond, that is already there somewhere. It happens, with a sincere demand or aspiration in the consciousness, a certain readiness in the being. When that happens (something in the manner of the Upanishadic *vivṛṇute tanum svām*—he unveils himself his own body), you feel as if a sheer blank, even a black void has entered into you and captured you. In the very midst of whirlwind activity comes a dead stop. Nothing is there now, no idea, no thought, no notion, no motion even—an immense emptiness has eaten up, engulfed everything. Keep steady and await. In that stillness something rises up—up and up—and goes out beyond, a tranquil beam of consciousness. And then something descends, from afar—a peace, a luminousness, authentic and absolute in its reality. It comes down, enters into you, possesses your brain and body. It has, you find, resolved all problems, harmonised all contraries and conflicts; for it comes from the home of mother truth. Now you do not strive, but you know, you do not grope, for you are led. You await and at each moment you receive the direction as to what is to be done; you have no thought or preoccupation, the inspired movement happens automatically and infallibly.

Sometimes it happens too that the sudden silence or inner immobility causes a bewilderment and you are caught by a fear that you are losing all bearings, that you are turning an absolute idiot or something worse. Some

MENTAL SILENCE

in a panic have let go the grace that came. In such a condition one has to be firm and steady and continue.

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I have said normally you are assailed by all kinds of thought. They come into your brain from all quarters and demand audience and satisfaction. Thoughts need come into the brain, because actions become possible through them, they give the form and frame to your action. But the difficulty is that the thoughts are not only various but almost always contrary to each other; we see man so often moving in contrary directions and contradicting himself at each step. It is bound to be so if the doors of the mind are left wide open. Sometimes, however, or in some persons, one dominant thought takes possession of the mind and drives out all others. In such a case, when a single idea rules, one is likely to cut oneself down, narrow oneself and force the being into a strait-jacket, to move in a closed groove. The being in its entirety does not find self-expression or self-fulfilment. Thus you may have the idea, the fixed idea, that the world is irrevocably miserable and incorrigible and therefore you will naturally plan your whole life to that end, all your occupation and preoccupation will be how to get away from this world, you will seek a far solitude, inner and outer, seek release from existence and merge into the Transcendent or the Void. On the other hand, if you have the idea that in spite of all appearances to the contrary the world is remediable and reclaimable, then your life takes on a different pattern. It will seek to find out ways and means of the remedy and to what degree the possibility goes.

Now, the value of an idea cannot be determined by the idea itself. Usually one chooses because of some external reason or other: one's education, environment, one's personal temperament, likes and dislikes go a long way in determining one's choice. So the first thing you have to do is not to allow the thoughts to come in pell-mell, as and when they like. Thoughts must come only when you choose them and only those that you choose. There must be a conscious selection. How to proceed in this work? As your own thoughts cannot choose themselves, what you have to do at the outset is to call for a higher guidance and let yourself be absolutely impartial and passive in its hands.

A blankness is needed, a white emptiness somewhere behind—even if it does not come and occupy the front too. Give up personal choosing and

wait for the Higher Direction—the Divine—to do with you whatever it wills. Given the requisite silence and reliance, the decision comes inevitably and you are moved to do automatically what is required to be done from moment to moment. At first you may not get the knowledge of the why and the wherefore of your action, you act merely as an automaton but with the luminous silence within and a tranquil aspiration attending. When once you have been trained in this unquestioning docility, then knowledge will be given to you gradually, at first only of a few steps ahead, later on for a fuller and completer perspective.

MIND, ORGAN OF SEPARATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

The world is one, indissolubly and solidly one: no part can be separated from any other. Any action anywhere affects the whole and nothing can be moved even a hair's breadth without changing the entire balance. Each element literally lives, moves and has its being in every other and the totality is a rigidly unified mass.

If it is so, then there arises a difficulty, a dilemma. For the world to progress at all, under the circumstances, it must progress as a whole, en masse; it cannot progress piecemeal. The totality must advance in order that each element may progress and each element must advance so that the totality may progress. Perhaps this is what is happening actually in the world: but the result, if nothing else, has been rather slow. It will take not only millenniums but aeons for humanity to make any progress worth the name.

It need not be so however. Man is solidly one with the universe, true; but he has a faculty in him by which he can separate, isolate himself from the rest of the world. It is the mind's power of self-division and dissociation. Through this faculty man can put the world aside and outside himself (for a time, at least), cut away from it and concentrate upon his own being, his inner truth, in other words, make the progress in himself, as quickly as possible, independently, without waiting for others or the world to progress in any degree. And then when once he has made the progress himself, achieved a new higher status, he can turn back upon the world and bring to bear upon it the force of his progress and establish the progress more generally.

This power which in the inferior human consciousness appears as mind or mental discernment is the image or delegate here below of that very

force of consciousness that originally separated the world from the Divine, created the ego and placed it as an objective reality against itself. It was a force of dividing consciousness, of exclusive concentration, that created the fission in the original unitary status of the Divine: it was that that precipitated the world of negation, of ignorance and inconscience, out of the supreme Light and Reality.

It was a power of denial that severed the world from its pure source: the same power can now be utilised for the return back for the reintegration. The power that separated from the Divine is capable of separating from the world; the consciousness that moved away from the One Divine can move away also from the Multiple Ignorance. As the individualised element isolated itself from the unitary consciousness of the Divine, in the same way the individualised element in man can stand aloof from the unitary being of the world: as it came down the ladder of consciousness from the supreme light of the spirit into the lowest depth of unconscious dead matter, the same path he can take in the opposite way and from the unconsciousness rise into the fullness of the original light. The soul has freely chosen the bondage, he is free too to choose his freedom again. That is what the Upanishad meant when it said: *avidyayā mṛtyum tirtwā*, by the Ignorance he shall cross death.

TWO POEMS

(I)

THERE are no voices anywhere;
The heaven is bare, so bare
That it seems nude
With a high nakedness of blue
Expectancy shot through
With solitude.

I will not pause to ask or think
But stand upon the brink
Of the lone stage
Where every soul must needs arrive
Then suddenly must dive
Out of all age,

Out of all circumstance and clime
A stranger unto time
For evermore.
O God! what a mysterious sea
Slowly confronteth me
Without a shore.

TWO POEMS

(2)

EACH man in terms of God is all alone
And worketh out his destiny apart;
Each one has a god-manner all his own
Dependent on the nature of his heart.
Each man is a separate-zoning¹ Sphere
Revolving in a distant quest of Him;
Each one contains his own world-atmosphere
Expressed in every movement of his limb.

But gifted with a solitary sense
Within, of the suspension of all thought
In a late atmosphere of evening-air
Hung with a distant twinkle-host of lights
Of which at times I am all unaware
Because I move beyond earth's outer nights. For soon or late
I know I shall be lighted like a star
In a calm firmament of wisdom bowed
Over the world, without a trace of cloud.
Each holds the other in a mystic grip
Of two hands clasping in Eternity.

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ or, moving

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

(*New Series*)

THERE are two allied powers in man: Knowledge and Wisdom.

Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; Wisdom what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit.

Inspiration is a slender river of brightness leaping from a vast and eternal knowledge; it exceeds reason more perfectly (?) than reason exceeds the knowledge of the senses.

When I speak, the reason says, "This will I say"; but God takes the word out of my mouth and the lips say something else at which reason trembles.

I am not a Jnani, for I have no knowledge except what God gives me for His work. How am I to know whether what I see be reason or folly? Nay, it is neither; for the thing seen is simply true and neither folly nor reason.

If mankind only caught a glimpse of what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all and never rest till they had gained these treasures. But the way is narrow, the doors are hard to force, and fear, distrust and scepticism are there, tentacles of Nature to forbid the turning away of our feet from less ordinary pastures.

Late, I learned that when reason died then Wisdom was born; before that liberation, I had only knowledge.

What we call knowledge is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees. Reason fixes details and contrasts them. Reason divides, Wisdom marries contrasts in a single harmony.

Either do not give the name of knowledge to your beliefs only and of error,

* From old writings

ignorance or charlatanism to the beliefs of others; or do not rail at the dogmas of the sects and their intolerance.

What the soul sees and has experienced that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

My soul knows that it is immortal. But you take a dead body to pieces and cry triumphantly, "Where is your soul and where is your immortality?"

Immortality is not the survival of the mental personality after death, though that also is true, but the waking possession of the unborn and deathless Self of which body is only an instrument and a shadow.

They proved to me by convincing reasons that God does not exist, and I believed them. Afterwards I saw God, for He came and embraced me. And now which am I to believe, the reasonings of others or my own experience?

They told me, "These things are hallucinations". I enquired what was a hallucination and found that it meant a subjective or psychical experience which corresponds to no objective or physical reality. Then I sat and wondered at the miracles of the human reason.

Hallucination is the term of Science for those irregular glimpses we still have of truth shut out from us by our preoccupation with matter; coincidence for the curious touches of artist,—in the work of that supreme and universal Intelligence which in its conscious being, as on a canvas, has planned and executed the world.

That which men term a hallucination is the reflection in the mind and senses of that which is beyond our ordinary mental and sensory perception, and superstition arises from the mind's wrong understanding of these reflections. There is no other hallucination.

Do not like so many modern disputants smother thought under polysyllables or charm inquiry to sleep by the spell of formulas and cant words. Search always: find out the reason for things which seem to the hasty glance to be mere chance illusion.

Someone was laying down that God must be this or that or He would not be God. But it seemed to me that I can only know what God is and I do not see how I can tell Him what He ought to be. For what is the standard by which we can judge Him? These judgments are the follies of our egoism.

Chance is not in this universe; the idea of illusion is itself an illusion. There was never illusion yet in the human mind that did not conceal and disfigure a truth.

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THE ADVENT

I have failed, thou sayest. Say rather that God is circling about towards His object.

Foiled by the world, thou turnest to seize upon God. If the world is stronger than thou, thinkest thou God is weaker? Turn to Him rather for His bidding and for strength to fulfil it.

So long as a Cause has on its side one soul that is intangible in faith, it cannot perish.

Reason gives me no basis for this faith, thou murmurest. Fool! if it did, faith would not be needed or demanded of thee.

Faith in the heart is the obscure and often distorted reflection of a hidden knowledge.

The believer is often more plagued by doubt than the most inveterate sceptic. He persists because there is something subconscious in him which knows. That tolerates both his blind faith and twilit doubts and drives towards the revelation of that which it knows.

The world thinks that it moves by the light of reason, but it is really impelled by its faiths and instincts.

Reason adapts itself to the faith or argues out a justification of the instincts; but it receives the impulse subconsciously, therefore men think that they act rationally.

The only business of reason is to arrange and criticise the perceptions. It has neither in itself any means of positive conclusion nor any command to action. When it pretends to originate or impel, it is masking other agencies.

Until Wisdom comes to thee, use the reason for its God-given purposes and faith and instinct for theirs. Why shouldst thou set thy members to war upon each other?

Perceive always and act in the light of thy increasing perceptions but not those of the reasoning brain only. God speaks to the heart when the brain cannot understand Him.

If thy heart tell thee, "Thus and by such means and at such a time it will happen," believe it not. But if it gives thee the purity and wideness of God's command, hearken to it.

When thou hast the command, care only to fulfil it. The rest is God's will and arrangement which men call chance and luck and fortune.

SRI AUROBINDO

HYMN TO BRAHMANASPATI*

MASTER OF THE SOUL

1. O Master of the Soul, make Kakshivan, Son of Ushijas, a sweet soul and a good fighter.

2. May he who is bold and impetuous, who slays all unfriendly things, the knower of substance of being, the increaser of fullness, cleave to us, he who is strong and swift.

3. Let not the aspiration and the eagerness of mortal man in his struggle perish in us, O Master of the Soul, protect us.

4. That hero smites and is not hurt, whom Indra and Brahmanaspati and Soma befriend, a mortal man.

5. Him mortal, O Brahmanaspati, let Soma protect from harm and Indra, both auspicious grown.

6. I have laboured for¹ the wondrous master of the house, the beloved, the desired of Indra, for steadfastness in weal I have laboured and for capacity of soul.

7. He without whom the Yajna comes not to fulfilment, even of the man of discerning heart, he hath power over the Yoga of the movements of the understanding.

8. He confirms the offering of the oblations, he carries forward the work of the sacrifice, by the priest of the offering he moves with the gods.

9. I saw One, strong of aspiration, utterly audacious, wide and expanding besieging as it were the seats of heaven.

SRI AUROBINDO

* Rig Veda, I. 18. Rishi: Medhatithi Kanva
Or, towards

PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS*

V

MAYA: THE ENERGY OF THE ABSOLUTE

MAYA then is the fundamental fact in the Universe, her dualistic system of balanced pairs of opposites is a necessity of intellectual conception; but the possibility of her existence as an inherent energy in the Absolute, outside phenomena, has yet to be established. So long as Science is incomplete and Yoga a secret discipline for the few, the insistent questions of the metaphysician can never be ignored, nor his method grow obsolete. The confident and even arrogant attempt of experimental Science to monopolise the kingdom of mind, to the exclusion of the metaphysical and all other methods, was a rash and premature aggression,—rash because premature; successful at first, its victorious usurping onrush is beginning to stagger and fail, even to lose hold on positions once thought to be permanently secured. The slow resurgence of metaphysics has already begun. Certainly, no metaphysics can be admissible which does not take count of the standards and undoubted results of Science; but until experimental analysis has solved the whole mystery of the Universe, not by speculation through logic (a method stolen from metaphysics with which Science has no business) but by experimental proof and hypotheses checked and confirmed by experimental proof, leaving no phenomenon unaccounted for and no fact ignored,—until then metaphysics must reign where analytic experiment leaves a void. Vedanta, though it bases itself chiefly on the subjective experimental methods of Yoga, and admits no metaphysical hypothesis as valid which is not in agreement with its results, is yet willing to submit its own conclusions to the tests of metaphysical logic. The Vedantic Yogin shrinks at present because of certain moral scruples, from divulging his arcana to the crowd, but he recognises that so long as he refuses, he has no right to evade the inquisition of the

* From old writings

metaphysical logician. Atharvan and Svetasvatara having spoken, Shankara and Ramanuja must be allowed their arena of verbal discussion.

The metaphysical question involved turns upon the nature of Avidya, Nescience, and its possibility in Parabrahman who is, after all, absolute,—Absolute Consciousness and therefore Absolute Knowledge. It is not sound to say that Parabrahman envisaging Maya, *becomes* capable of Avidya; for envisagement of Maya is simply a metaphorical expression for Avidya itself. Neither can the Vedantist take refuge in the theologian's evasion of reason by an appeal to lawless Omnipotence, to the *credo quia Impossibile*. The Eternal is undoubtedly in His own nature free and unlimited, but, as undoubtedly, He has deliberately bound Himself in His relation to phenomena by certain fundamental principles; He has willed that certain things shall not and cannot be, and to use a human parallel He is like a King who having promulgated a certain code is as much bound by His own laws as the meanest subject, or like a poet whose imaginations in themselves free, are limited by laws the moment they begin to take shape. We may say, theoretically, that God being Omnipotent can create something out of nothing, but so long as no single clear instance can be given of a something created out of nothing, the rule of *ex nihilo nihil fit* remains an universal and fundamental law and to suppose that God has based the Universe on a violation of a fundamental law of the Universe, is to kick Reason out of the house and slam the door against her return. Similarly, if the coexistence of Avidya with Vidya in the same field and as it were interpenetrating each other, is against the Law, it does by that very fact become impossible and the theory of Maya will then be proved an error; no appeal to Omnipotence will save it.

The objection to Avidya may be stated thus that Absolute knowledge cannot at the same time not know, cannot imagine a thing to be real which is not real; for such imagination involves an element of self-deception, and self-deception is not possible in the Absolute. But is it really a law of consciousness—for there lies the point—that things can in no sense be at the same time real and unreal, that you cannot by any possibility imagine things to be real which *at the same time* you know perfectly well to be unreal? The dualist objectors may contend that this impossibility is a law of consciousness. The Vedantin replies at once *Negatur*, your statement is refuted by a host of examples; it is inconsistent with Universal experience. The most utter and avowed unrealities can be and are firmly imaged as realities, seen as realities, sensed as realities, conceived as realities without the mind for a moment admitting that they are indeed real. The mirage of the desert we

know after a time to be unreal, but even then we see and firmly image it as a reality, admire the green beauty of those trees and pant for the cool shining delight of those waters. We see dreams and dreams are unrealities, and yet some of them at least are at the same time not positive unrealities, for they image, and sometimes very exactly, events which have happened, are happening or will happen in the future. We see the juggler throw a rope in the air, climb up it, kill the boy who has preceded him and throw down his bleeding limbs piecemeal on the earth; every detail and circumstance of the unreal event corresponding to the event as it would have been, were it real; we do not imagine it to be unreal while it lasts, and we cannot so imagine it; for the visualisation is too clear and consistent, the feelings it awakes in us are too vivid, and yet all the time we perfectly well know that no such thing is happening. Instances of this sort are not easily numbered.

But these are distant, unimmediate things and for some of them the evidence may not be considered ample. Let us come nearer to our daily life. We see a stone and we note its properties of solidity and immobility, nor can we by any persuasion be induced to imagine it as anything else but solid and immobile; and we are right, for it is both: and yet we know that its immobility and solidity are not real, that it is, and to a vision sensible of the infinitesimal would appear, a world of the most active motion, of myriads of atoms *with spaces between them*. Again, if there is one thing that is real to me, it is this, that I am vertical and upright, whatever the people at the Antipodes may be and that I walk in all directions horizontally along the earth; and yet alas! I know that I am in reality not vertical but nearer the horizontal, walking often vertically up and down the earth like a fly on the wall. I know it perfectly, yet if I were constantly to translate my knowledge into imagination, a padded room in Bedlam would soon be the only place for me. This is indeed the singular and amazing law of our consciousness that it is perfectly capable of holding two contradictory conceptions at the same time and with equal strength. We accept the knowledge which Science places at our disposal, but we perpetually act upon the images which Nescience creates. I know that the sun does not rise or set, does not move round the earth, does not sail through the heavens marking the time of day as it proceeds, but in my daily life I act precisely on the supposition that this unreality really happens; I hourly and momentarily conceive it and firmly image it as real and sometimes regulate on it my every movement. The eternal belligerents, Science and Nescience, have come in this matter of the sun's motion, as in so many others, to a working com-

promise. To me as an untrammelled Will to live who by the subtle intellectual part of me, can wander through the Eternity and place myself as a spectator in the centre of the sun or even outside the material Universe the better to observe its motions, the phenomenon of the earth's movement round the sun is the reality, and even Nescience consents that I shall work on it as an acknowledged fact in the operations of pure intellect; but to me as a trammelled body unable to leave the earth and bound down in my daily life to the ministry of my senses, the phenomenon of the sun's movement round the earth is the reality and to translate my intellectual knowledge into the stuff of my daily imaginations would be intolerably inconvenient; it would take my secure resting-place, the earth, from under my feet and make havoc of my life in sensation; even Science therefore consents that I shall work on the evidence of my senses as an acknowledged fact in my material life of earth-bounded existence. In this duplicity of standpoint we see as in a glass darkly some image of the manner in which the Absolute wills to be phenomenally conditioned; at once knows perfectly what is, yet chooses to image what is not, having infinite Science, yet makes room for self-limiting Nescience. It is not necessary to labour the point, or to range through all scientific knowledge for instances; in the light of modern knowledge the objection to the coexistence of Vidya and Avidya cannot stand; it is a perpetual fact in the daily economy of Consciousness.

Yes, it may be argued, but this does not establish it as anything more than a possibility in regard to the Absolute. A state of things true throughout the range of phenomenal existence, may cease to operate at the point where phenomena themselves cease. The possibility, however, once granted, Vedanta is entitled to put forward Maya as the one successful explanation yet advanced of this manifold existence; first, because Maya does explain the whole of existence metaphysically and is at the same time an universal, scientifically observable fact ranging through the whole Universe and fundamentally present in every operation of Consciousness; secondly, because it does transcend phenomena as well as inform them, it has its absolute as well as its conditioned state and is therefore not only possible in the Absolute but must be the Absolute Himself in manifestation; and thirdly, because no other possible explanation can logically contain *both* the truth of sheer transcendent Absoluteness of the Brahman and the palpable, imperative existence of the phenomenal Universe.¹ Illogical theories,

¹ Of course I am not prepared, in these limits, to develop the final argument; that

theories which part company with reason, theories which, instead of basing themselves in observed laws, take their stand in the void, may be had in plenty. Maya is no theory but a fact; no mere result of logic or speculation, but of careful observation and yet unassailable by logic and unsurpassable by speculation.

One of the most remarkable manifestations of Avidya in human consciousness, presenting in its nature and laws of working a close analogy to its parent is the power of imagination,—the powers of bodying forth images which may either be reabsorbed into the individual consciousness which gave them forth or outlast it. Of the latter kind poetical creation is a salient example. At a certain time in a certain country one named Shakespeare created a new world by the force of his Avidya, his faculty of imagining what is not. That world is as real and unreal today as it was when Shakespeare created it or in more accurate Vedantic language *asṛjata*, loosed it forth, from the causal world within him. Within the limits of that world, Iago is real to Othello, Othello to Desdemona, and all are real to any and every consciousness which can for a time abstract itself from this world, its self-created surroundings and enter the world of Shakespeare. We are aware of them, observe them, grow in knowledge about them, see them act, hear them speak, feel for their griefs and sorrows; and even when we return to our own world, they do not always leave us, but sometimes come with us and influence our actions. The astonishing power of poetical creation towards moulding life and history, has not yet been sufficiently observed; yet it was after all Achilles, the swift-footed son of Peleus, who thundered through Asia at the head of his legions, dragged Batis at his chariot-wheels and hurled the Iranian to his fall,—Achilles, the son of Peleus, who never lived except as an image,—nay, does not omniscient learning tell us, that even his creator never lived, or was only a haphazard assortment of poets who somehow got themselves collectively nicknamed Homer! Yet these images, which we envisage as real and confess by our words, thoughts, feelings, and sometimes even by our actions to be real, are, all the time and we know them perfectly well to be as mythical as the dream, the mirage and the juggler on his rope. There is no Othello, no Iago, no Desdemona but all these are merely varieties of name and form, not of Shakespeare, but in which Shakespeare is immanent and which still exist merely because

would imply a detailed examination of all metaphysical systems, which would be in itself the labour of a life-time.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS

Shakespeare is immanent in them. Nevertheless he who best succeeds in imaging forth these children of illusion, this strange harmonic Maya, is ever adjudged by us to be the best poet, Creator or Maker, even though others may link words more sweetly together or dovetail incidents more deftly. The parallel between this work of imagination and the creation of phenomena and no less between the relation of the author to his creatures and the relation of the Conditioned Brahman to His creatures is astonishingly close in most of their details no less than in their general nature. Observe, for instance, that in all that multitude of figures vicious and virtuous, wise and foolish, he their creator who gave them forth, their Self and reality without whom they cannot exist, is unaffected by their crimes and virtues, irresponsible and free. The Lord...What then? Is this analogy anything more than poetic fancy, or is not after all, the whole idea of Brahman and Maya itself a mere poetic fancy? Perhaps, but not more fanciful or unreal, in that case, than the Universe itself and its motions; for the principle and working of the two are identical.

Let us ask ourselves, what it is that has happened when a great work of creation takes place and how it is that Shakespeare's creatures are still living to us, now that Shakespeare himself is dead and turned to clay. Singular indeed that Shakespeare's creations should be immortal and Shakespeare himself a mere shortlived conglomeration of protoplasmic cells! We notice first that Shakespeare's dramatic creatures are only a selection or anthology from among the teeming images which peopled that wonderful mind; there were thousands of pictures in that gallery which were never produced for the admiration of the ages. This is a truth to which every creator whether he use stone or colour or words for his thought-symbols will bear emphatic testimony. There was therefore a subtler and vaster world in Shakespeare than the world we know him to have bodied forth into tangible material of literature. Secondly we note that all these imaginations already existed in Shakespeare unmanifested and unformed before they took shape and body; for certainly they did not come from outside. Shakespeare took his materials from this legend or that play, this chronicle or that history? His framework possibly, but not his creations; Hamlet did not come from the legend or the play, nor Cassius or King Henry from the history or the chronicle. No, Shakespeare contained in himself all his creatures, and therefore transcended and exceeded them; he was and is more than they or even than their sum and total; for they are merely limited manifestations of him under the conditions of time and

space, and he would have been the same Shakespeare, even if we had not a scene or a line of him to know him by; only the world of imagination would have remained latent in him instead of manifest, *avyakta* instead of *vyakta*. Once manifest, his creatures are preserved immortally, not by print or manuscript, for the Veda has survived thousands of years without print or manuscript,—but, by words, shall we say? no, for words or sounds, are only the physical substance, the atoms out of which their shapes are built, and can be entirely rearranged,—by translation, for example—without our losing Othello and Desdemona, just as the indwelling soul can take a new body without being necessarily changed by the transmigration. Othello and Desdemona are embodied in sounds or words, but thought is their finer and immortal substance. It is the subtler world of thought in Shakespeare from which they have been selected and bodied forth in sounds, and into the world of thought they originally proceeded from a reservoir of life deeper than thought itself, from an ocean of being which our analysis has not yet fathomed.

Now, let us translate these facts into the conceptions of Vedanta. Parabrahman self-limited in the name and form of Shakespeare, dwells deepest in him invisible to consciousness as the unmanifest world of that something more elemental than thought, (may it not be causal, elemental Will?) in which Shakespeare's imaginations lie as yet unformed and undifferentiated; then he comes to a surface of consciousness visible to Shakespeare as the inwardly manifest world of subtle matter or thought in which those imaginations take subtle thought-shapes and throng; finally, he rises to a surface of consciousness visible to others besides Shakespeare as the outwardly manifest world, manifest in sound, in which a select number of these imaginations are revealed to universal view. These mighty images live immortally in our minds because Parabrahman in Shakespeare is the same as Parabrahman in ourselves; and because, Shakespeare's thought is, therefore, water of the same etheric ocean as that which flows through our brains; thought, in fact, is one, although to be revealed to us, it has to be bodied forth and take separate shapes in sound forms which we are accustomed to perceive and understand. Brahman-Brahma as Thought-Creative in Shakespeare brings them forth, Brahman-Vishnu as Thought-Preservative in us maintains them, Brahman-Rudra as Thought-Destructive or Oblivion will one day destroy them; but in all these operations-Brahman is one, Thought is one, even as all the Oceans are one. Shakespeare's world is in every way a parable of ours. There is, however, a distinction—Shakes-

peare could not body forth his images into forms palpable in gross matter either because, as other religions believe, that power is denied to man, or because, as Vedantism suggests, mankind has not risen as yet to that pitch of creative force.

There is one class of phenomena however in which this defect of identity between individual Imagination and universal Avidya seems to be filled up. The mind can create under certain circumstances images surviving its own dissolution or departure, which do take some kind of form in gross matter or at least matter palpable to the gross senses. For the phenomena of apparitions there is an accumulating mass of evidence. Orthodox Science prefers to ignore the evidence, declines to believe that a *prima facie* case has been made out for investigation and shuts the gate on farther knowledge with a triple polysyllabic key, mysticism, coincidence, hallucination. Nevertheless, investigated or not, the phenomena persist in occurring. Hauntings, for example, for which there are only scattered indications in Europe, are in India, owing to the more strenuous psychical force and more subtle psychical sensitiveness of our physical organisation, fairly common. In these hauntings we have a signal instance of the triumph of imagination. In the majority of cases they are images created by dying or doomed men in their agony which survive the creator, some of them visible, some audible, some both visible and audible, and in rare cases in an unearthly, insufficient, but by no means inefficient manner, palpable. The process of their creation is in essence the same as attends the creation of poetry or the creation of the world; it is *tapas* or *tapasyā*,—not penance as English scholars will strangely insist on translating it, but HEAT, and tremendous concentration of will, which sets the whole being in a flame, masses all the faculties in closed ranks and hurls them furiously on a single objective. By *tapas* the world was created; by *tapas*, says the Moondaca, creative Brahman is piled up, *chiyate*, gathered and intensified; by *tapas* the rush of inspiration is effected. This *tapas* may be on the material plane associated with purpose or entirely dissociated from purpose. In the case of intense horror or grief, fierce agony or terrible excitement on the verge of death it is totally dissociated from any material purpose, it is what would be ordinarily called involuntary, but it receives from its origin an intensity so unparalleled as to create living images of itself which remain and act long after the source has been dissolved or stilled by death. Such is the ultimate power of imagination, though at present it cannot be fully used on the material plane except in a random, fortuitous and totally unpurposed manner.

In the manner of its working, then, Imagination is a carefully executed replica of Avidya; and if other marks of her essential identity with Avidya are needed, they can be found. Both are, for instance, preponderatingly purposeless. The workings of Imagination are often totally dissociated, on the material plane at least, from any intelligible purpose and though it is quite possible that the latent part of our consciousness which works below the surface, may have sometimes a purpose of which the superficial part is not aware, yet in the most ordinary workings of Imagination, an absolute purposelessness is surely evident. Certainly, if not purposelessness there is colossal waste. A few hundreds of images were selected from Shakespeare's mind for a definite artistic purpose, but the thousands that never found verbal expression, many of them with as splendid potentialities as those which did materialize in Hamlet and Macbeth seem to have risen and perished without any useful purpose. The same wastefulness is shown by Nature in her works; how many millions of lives does she not shower forth that a few may be selected for the purposes of evolution! Yet when she chooses to work economically and with set purpose, she like Imagination can become a scrupulous miser of effort and show itself possessed of a magical swiftness and sureness in shaping the means to the end. Neither Nature nor Imagination, therefore, can be supposed to be blind, random energies proceeding from an ungoverned force and teleological only by accident. Their operations are obviously guided by an Intelligence as perfectly capable, when it so wills, of purposing, planning, fitting its means to its ends, economising its materials and labour as any intelligent and careful workman in these days of science and method. We need therefore some explanation why this great universal Intelligence should not be, as a careful workman, always, not occasionally, economical of its materials and labour. Is not the truth this that Nature is not universally and in all her works teleological, that purpose is only one minor part of existence more concentrated than most and therefore more intense and triumphant, while for the greater part of her universal operation we must find another explanation than the teleological? or rather will at once contain and exceed the teleological? If it had only been Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Edison, Beethoven, Napoleon, Schopenhauer, the creators in poetry, art, science, music, life, or thought, who possessed imagination, we might then have found an use for their unused imaginations in the greater preparatory richness they gave to the soil from which a few exquisite flowers were to spring. The explanation might not be a good one, little more indeed than a poetical fancy, but it

could have passed for want of a better. But every human being possesses the divine faculty, more or less developed; every mind is a teeming world of imaginations; and indeed, imagination for imagination the opium-smoker's is more vivid, fertile and gorgeous than Shakespeare's. Yet hardly in one case out of a thousand are these imaginations of use to the world or anything but a practical hindrance or at best a purposeless pastime to the dreamer. Imagination is a fundamental energy of consciousness, and this marvellous, indomitable energy works on without caring whether she is put to use or misuse or no use at all; she exists merely for the sake of delight in her own existence. Here I think we touch bottom. Imagination is outside purpose, sometimes above, sometimes below it, sometimes united with it, because she is an inherent energy not of some great teleological Master-Workman, but of Ananda, the Bliss of existence or Will to live; and beyond this delight in existence she has no reason for being. In the same way Maya, the infinite creative energy which peoples the phenomenal Universe, is really some force inherent in the infinite Will to be; and it is for this reason that her operations seem so wasteful from the standpoint of utilitarian economy; for she cares nothing about utilitarianism or economy and is only obeying her fundamental impulse towards phenomenal existence, consciousness, and the pleasure of conscious existence. So far as she has a purpose, it is this, and all the teleologic element in Nature has simply this end, to find more perfect surroundings or more exquisite means or wider opportunities or a grander gust and scope for the pleasure of conscious phenomenal existence. Yet the deepest bliss is after all that which she left and to which she will return, not the broken and pain-bounded bliss of finite life, but the perfect and infinite Bliss of transcendent undivided and illimitable consciousness. She seeks for a while to find that perfect bliss by finite means and in finite things, the heaven of the socialist or anarchist, the heaven of the artist, the heaven of knowledge, the heaven of thought, or a heaven in some other world; but one day she realises that great truth, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you", and to that after all she returns. *This is Maya.*

One metaphysical test remains to be satisfied before we can be sure that Avidya and Vidya, the outcurve and incurve of Maya, go back to something eternally existent in the Absolute and are not created by phenomenal causes. If inherent in the Absolute, Maya must culminate in conceptions that are themselves absolute, infinite and unconditioned. Vidya tapers off into infinity in the conceptions, *Sat* or Pure Existence, *Chit* or Pure Con-

sciousness, *Ananda* or Pure Bliss; Avidya rises at her apex into *Asat*, Nothingness, *Achetanam*, Non-sentience, *Nirānandam*, Blisslessness or Misery. Nothingness and Non-sentience are certainly absolute conceptions, infinite and unconditioned; but the third term of the negative Trinity gives us pause. Absolute pain, blank infinite unconditioned and unrelieved Misery is a conception which Reason shies at and Consciousness refuses, violently refuses to admit as a possibility. A cypher if you like to make metaphysical calculations with, but by itself sheer nought, nowhere discoverable as existing or capable of existence. Yet if infinite misery could be, it would in the very act of being merge into Nothingness, it would lose its name in the very moment of becoming absolute. As a metaphysical conception we may then admit Absolute Blisslessness as a valid third term of the negative Trinity, not as a real or possible state, for no one of the three is a real or possible state. The unreality comes home to us most in the third term, just as reality comes home to us most in the third term of the positive Trinity, because Bliss and its negative blisslessness appeal to us on the material plane vividly and sensibly; the others touch us more indirectly, on the psychic and causal planes. Yet the nothingness of nothingness is taught us by Science, and the unreality of non-sentience will become clear when the nature of sentience is better understood.

It will be said that the escape from pleasure as well as pain is after all the common goal of Buddhism and Vedanta. True, escape from limited pleasure which involves pain, escape from pain which is nothing but the limitation of pleasure. Both really seek absolute absence of limitation which is not a negative condition, but a positive, infinity and its unspeakable, unmixed bliss; their escape from individuality does not lead them into nothingness, but into infinite existence, their escape from sensation does not purpose the annihilation of sentience but pure absolute consciousness as its goal. Not *Asat*, *Achetanam*, *Nirānandam*, but *Saccidānandam* is the great Reality to which Jivatman rises to envisage, the *Tat* or sole Thing-in-itself to whom by the force of Vidya he tends ever to return.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA*

(*A translation*)

CHAPTER IV

KRISHNA

THIS is the Yoga, I declared to Vivasvan, that cannot perish; Vivasvan told it to Manu, Manu to Ixvacou repeated it. Thus was it handed down from generation to generation, and known of the philosopher kings, till in a mighty lapse of time that Yoga was lost, O scourge of thy foemen. This is that same ancient Yoga that I today have declared to thee because thou art my worshipper and lover and friend, for it is the noblest mystery of all.

URJOONA

Of these latter times is thy birth, O Krishna, of the high ancient times was the birth of Vivasvan, how should I understand aright this thy saying that thou in the beginning declaredst it?

KRISHNA

Many are my births that are past and gone and thine also, Urjoona; all of them I know but thou knowest not, O scourge of thy foemen. Yea, though I be unborn, and imperishable Spirit, though I be the Lord of all creatures, yet I resort to my own nature and am born by the power of my Self-Illusion. For whenever and whenever righteousness and justice decline and faint upon the earth, O Bharata, and unrighteousness and injustice arise and flourish, then do I put forth myself; for the salvation of the pure and the

* From old writings

destruction of evildoers, to raise up justice and righteousness, I am born again and again from age to age. He who in this sort knoweth aright my divine birth and works, cometh not to birth when he leaveth the body, to Me he cometh, Urjoona. Many have sought refuge with me and made themselves full of me, who have risen beyond love and wrath and fear and made themselves holy by the austere energisms of Knowledge, and become even as Myself. In whatsoever way men come to me, in their own way I accept and love them; utterly, do men, O son of Pritha, follow in the path which I tread. Desiring good success of their works men sacrifice to the gods on earth, for very quickly in the world of men cometh the success that is born of works. By me were the four orders created according unto the division of the workings of the stuff of their nature; know Me for their maker and yet neither for doer nor maker who am imperishable. On Me actions leave no stain for I have no craving for their fruits; he who really knoweth this of Me is not bound by his works. Knowing that in this wise works were done by the ancient seekers after salvation, do thou also do works as they were done by the men of old. What is action and what is inaction, as to this the very sages are bewildered; therefore I will declare action unto thee by the knowledge whereof thou shalt be delivered out of evil. For of works thou must understand, of mis-work thou must understand, and thou must understand also of inaction; very difficult is the way of works and their mystery. He who in action can see inaction and action in inaction, he is the understanding mind among men; he doeth all works, yet is in Yoga. When the imaginations of desire are shut out from all that a man beginneth and undertaketh, and his works have been burned up in the fires of knowledge, then it is he that the wise call the truly learned. When he hath relinquished attachment to the fruit of his works, is ever satisfied of soul and dependeth not on any outward things, such a man though he engage himself deep in works yet really doeth nothing: pure of lusts, he is governed in heart and spirit, he hath surrendered all sense of belonging, doing actions only with his body he receiveth no stain of sin; well-content with the gains that chance and time may bring him, lifted above the plane of the dualities, void of jealousy, receiving success and failure as friends, though he do works yet is he not bound by them; leaving all heart-clingings behind him, a Spirit released, a mind safe in its tower of knowledge, performing works for a sacrifice, all his works are swallowed up and vanish.

Brahman is his giving and Brahman is his sacrifice, Brahman casteth and Brahman is cast into the fire that is Brahman; by Samadhi of his works in

Brahman he goeth unto Brahman. Of the Yogins some make to the natural Gods their session of sacrifice, others offer the sacrifice by the sacrifice into the fire that is Brahman. Some offer the hearing and all the senses into the fires of self-mastery and some offer sound and the other things of sense into the fires of the senses. All the works of the senses and all the works of the vital breath others offer into the Yoga-fire of a controlled Spirit that knowledge hath kindled with her hands. And some make the sacrifice of their goods, and some make a sacrifice of their austerity and others the knowledge of the Vedas. Lords of askesis are they all, keen in the vow of their undertaking. Some offer the upper breath into the lower and the lower breath into the upper, stopping the passages of the inbreath and outbreath, absorbed in government of the breath that is life; others, eating temperately, offer up the breaths into the breaths as into a sacrificial fire. And all these, yea all, are wise in sacrifice, and by sacrifice the obscuration of sin fades away from them, for they live on the remnants of their sacrifice, deeming it as the food of Gods, and rise to pass over into the Brahman that is for ever. This world belongeth not to him who doeth not sacrifice, how then shall another, O prince of the Kurus? Thus are there many sorts of sacrifice extended in the mouth of the Eternal; know all these to be born of works, so knowing thou shalt find deliverance. Better than the sacrifice that is all of goods is the sacrifice of knowledge, O Scourge of thy foemen, for all man's work upon earth accomplisheth itself utterly in Wisdom. This wisdom thou must learn by prostration and questioning and service; then shall the knowers, they who have seen the truth of existence initiate thee in the knowledge which, when thou hast learnt, thou shalt not again fall into delusion, O son of Pandou; by the knowledge thou shalt see all creatures, even to the meanest, in the Self and therefore in Me. Yea, wert thou the vilest and most lewd in sin, yet shouldest thou pass over to the other shore of Perversity in the ship of the Knowledge. Even as a fire when it hath been kindled, O Urjoona, burneth to ashes the fuel of it, even so doth the fire of the Knowledge burn all a man's works to nothingness. In all the world there is nought that is so great and pure as Wisdom, and one who hath been made perfect by Yoga findeth Wisdom in his self naturally and by the mere lapse of time. The man of faith, the self-devoted, who has bridled his senses, he winneth the Knowledge; and when a man has got the Knowledge, he attains very quickly to the high and perfect peace. But the ignorant, the man of little faith, the soul full of doubts, these go to perdition; this world is not for the doubting soul, nor the other world, nor any kind of happiness. But he who repositeth all his

THE ADVENT

works in Yoga and cleaveth Doubt asunder with the sharp edge of Knowledge, the man that possesseth his Self, O Dhananjoy, his works cannot bind. Therefore take up the sword of Knowledge, O Urjoona, and cleave asunder this Doubt that hath made his seat in thy heart, this child of the Ignorance; lay fast hold upon Yoga, arise, O seed of Bharat.

SRI AUROBINDO

TO THE MOTHER

(1)

Like dark blue clouds heavy with showers withheld,
Mother, your eyes more tender than the night,
Inscrutable, deep, with sight of worlds unknown
Are to your children an anchor firm of light.

Bathed in their calm tempestuous passions lie
Impassive, silent, while aspirations rise
Winging their way to sun-dreams of far light
Or moon-hued visions set in spirit skies.

(2)

Depths of unfathomed seas are in those eyes,
Whispering mysteries of the occult unknown
And changing magic tints that gloom and glow
White sorceries of light and silence lone.

A goddess exiled in a world of pain
Calmly you bear the torture and the strife
Cradling mortal frailty till it soar
Poised on eagle wings to immortal life.

LOTIKA

BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

IV

OUR first glimpses into the Beyond have revealed to us that Existence is a Unity of Being whose essential Nature is Consciousness. Then we discerned more widely that all is a sea of Consciousness whose active Nature is an all-pervading Force or Will. Thirdly we realised that a pure divine Delight or Bliss is indeed the spirit of the Being, the essence of the Consciousness and the living rhythm of the Force and the motive of the Will. All is then seen, whether in the play of the creative movement of the world or in the static stillness of the supracosmic Vast, in the concentrated essence of the individual being as equally as in the utter extensiveness of Cosmos, to be the infinite Delight of that all-extensive Conscious-Force and Being which in their interlinked relation form the triple Nature of the Divine inherent in all things. Yet our own essential being is largely obscured from us by the false self or ego, which bars us to the realisation of our oneness with the Divine Consciousness. It is clear therefore that the secret centre of the being must be progressively unveiled by our opening to a higher Power and Knowledge beyond the ego, which is disclosed to be the supramental Consciousness. Such must be the fundamental basis of transformation of our all-too resistant nature and of our life in the world.

But having reached this realisation and the way of our progressive development, the first difficulty that confronts us is the apparent opposition and wide disparity between our worldly life and the Knowledge and Perfection beyond. For while the former presents itself (in real terms to our practical sense of things) as a world of disharmony and perversity, the latter appears to be but a remote ideal, a vain dream of a Perfection utterly beyond this struggling world. The dilemma thus presented had resolved itself in the past into two divergent aims, which depend on the metaphysical premise from which one starts to solve the problem. If our initial outlook rests on the view that this worldly life has to be ultimately relinquished in order to reach a heavenly Perfection, then obviously a divine Life on earth is impos-

sible. And if on the other hand we regard the outer reality of the world as the ultimate, fixed or limited condition of life, then the idea of a real Beyond (which will manifest itself here) becomes equally chimerical. In both cases there is the sharp division between what is here and what lies beyond; and moreover this resolution of the problem cuts radically into our deeper experiences of an all-pervading Unity, which at higher and deeper levels is revealed to embrace in a single cosmological Whole that which is here with the infinitely vaster Beyond. This experience springs essentially from an inner realisation, in which we are conscious that all and everything are embraced by One Supreme and omnipresent Reality. It is only by shifting one's viewpoint from the egocentric outlook to a constant consciousness of that Reality omnipresent, that one can arrive more permanently at this integral and reconciling solution.

At first, however, we appear to be separated from the Divine by an immeasurable gulf; and it is only by taking as our starting point the paths trodden by those rare spiritual venturers who have thus far attempted to bridge that gulf, (not transcending or overleaping it and seeking for the supracosmic consciousness as the goal of human endeavour), that we discover the presence of an intermediate link which is as yet occult to us and unmanifest. It was this zone between man and the sublime Heights which the ancient Aryan Seers had recognised to be the habitation of a dynamic Truth-consciousness, and the very creative centre of Cosmos. Thus to possess that Truth-knowledge would verily bring one into an intimate and direct contact with the Divine Consciousness, which reveals the Knowledge of the totality, and the true relation of man and cosmos to that which is eternally beyond even Cosmos. In the old Vedic cosmology we find some of the most illuminating cosmic revelations, which provide for us a living source of knowledge and hence form the most natural starting-point in our quest for the higher truths. It is particularly by this path that Sri Aurobindo has traced for us those subtle connections between the Beyond and our present human endeavour, which the ancients had not so detailedly explored, since they were as yet preoccupied with the broad detached symbolical representation of the cosmic Reality. By unveiling the secrets of this ancient long-hidden Knowledge, the ways from man to the Divine Consciousness as well as those from the Divine Consciousness reaching down to man, have been more significantly revealed to us and brought within the orbit of our conscious comprehension and grasp.

Once we have grasped the significance of Supermind its very presence is

realised to be an imperative necessity both for man's ascent and for the world development. By our widening to that Knowledge of Supermind and contacting the Power it holds out, only then can we bridge the gap and the incompatibility between the absolute Perfection of the Divine Nature and this world entrammelled in Ignorance. We have already seen that Supermind is the very creative Power of the Divine, containing the concentrated Wholeness of the infinite Vast, and has brought forth from itself a world of diverse rhythms and multiple action-centres, each bearing the dynamic seed of the Divine Nature, so we can now realise that the very presence of this divine cosmic Power, even though in seed, in the midst of our earthly life, is the most powerful assurance that Supermind will be the ultimate deliverer of the world. There is also the constant pressure of its omnipotent Will from above so that even the stubborn resistance of mind must eventually give way to a Consciousness which is directly charged with the Divine Knowledge acting infallibly in accordance with the Divine Will. This must be the beginning of a divinised life on earth, wholly impregnated with the Divine Knowledge, and not immersed in ignorance and unknowing as man's present world-life now is. It must be observed however, that the higher Knowledge spoken of does not mean the mere acquisition of a greater mental knowledge, though the faculty of mind has indeed an important part to play in disciplining and preparing the lower nature for that which is as yet beyond its reach. For mental knowledge is but a secondary means of knowing, and on the purely intellectual level has no direct power for grasping the integral Truth of things. It is only as a trained and responsive instrument of the higher Light and Consciousness that it can undistortedly reflect the Truth, and become a perfect function and channel for the operation of the Divine Will here in the world, instead of resting on the false self-sufficiency of its ego-centricity.

The significant character of the Truth-consciousness, embracing and embraced by the triple Nature of the Divine, is that it brings to this three-fold Nature a fourth principle which is its dynamic Will of creative activity. It is this divine Power of creative action that specifically distinguishes Supermind from the pure Divine Nature which in itself is all-extensive and illimitable. Yet being derived from and bearing the full impress of the Divine Nature it is natural that its action should be characterised by the three general poises which correspond to the triple Nature of its origin. (Such at least has been the discovery of that spiritual probing which sought to open up a way between mind and the near though as yet veiled Truth-

consciousness). The first poise is that founded on the indivisible Unity—the source of all being,—which forms the unshakable foundation of its vast creativity. In the second poise there is the first primary modification of that unity such that it can support the manifestation of the Many, which it has created out of the unchanging Unity. Yet at the same time it retains the constant contact between the immaculate One and the infinite diversity of the Many. The third poise brings in a further modification in order to support and co-ordinate the diversity of individual entities that constitute the multiple growing-points of the Many. It is these latter, struggling through the Ignorance of the lower Nature and the egoism of mind, that are obliged to seek their union with and recovery of that original Purity from which they had heretofore become separated and detached. The first poise of Supermind is indeed the all-extensive quiescent state; but it is a tranquility fraught with the creative Idea of the Supreme and containing the latent seed of what is willed by God to bring forth in His Creation. Differentiation has not yet entered, so even material substance would be as yet a form of Spirit, diffuse and rarefied, having not yet condensed into a denseness of substance. In the second poise the Divine Consciousness separates the Idea from the movement so that an apprehending Consciousness emerges from the all-comprehensive extensivity, while the latter retains a constant hold on the movement it has thus released from itself. It is the preparation for the unleashing of diverse centres of freedom with separative developments but without the wide comprehensive freedom of the primary poise that is here produced, and marks the beginning of a further separativeness which will permit the differentiation of the soul-forms and the appearance of the status of the individual Divine as distinct from that of the all-extensive universal Divine. It is the stage when the diverse centres of concentrated Consciousness emerge out of the infinite undifferentiated extension. But even so it is only a practical differentiation that is ever, held by and based on its immovable and integral Oneness. While in the universal Divine the supernature is equal in all things, it is in the individualised status that it turns into a multitude of diverse centres each of which acts according to its own law of being and function in the collectivity.

This latter is the third poise of Supermind wherein we see the full active participation of the dynamic principle having become directly involved in the function. Here Supermind has projected itself into the diversity of the cosmic movement, and has become wholly involved in it,—or more exactly, has become the secret essence of all the individual seed-forms. But the divi-

nity is not thereby lost or diminished through this plunge into an infinite self-division. By the individualisation of this tertiary poise the soul-seed is imbued with the Consciousness of its origin, which thus gives the constant inner link with the One Supreme, as well as with the dynamic creative Power of the Divine that is its motive-force of growth and development. It is indeed through this intimate and all-embracing penetration into the heart of all things, that Supermind maintains a supreme harmony and coordination throughout all its creative activity.

But man himself, striving for a balance and harmony in his own life and in the world, has only succeeded in creating a widespread disruption and even greater disharmony. This is inevitable so long as he looks only to mind as being the highest factor and attainment of his earth life. It is because of this stubborn narrowness that he has not yet learnt the need to accept the integral Reality of the Divine and to bring this into his life, and to found his whole outlook on the truth of the Divine's activity in the world. This new orientation naturally necessitates his reaching towards a higher knowledge that will reveal to him the very nature and the overarching presence of Supermind. For without that fundamental knowledge as the firm foundation and central fulcrum of his activities, he cannot hope to free himself of all the diverse mental conflicts and uncertainties that belong to the ego-centric nature and the aimless cycling of mind. Indeed mind's greatest function is to build a stairway growing up to the Heights. In this way man would become cognisant of the fact that it is the soul in him that must become the true centre of his higher growth and expansiveness, for this latter alone will be able to embrace the Truth-consciousness fully in its descent into the world. Mind must hence come to realise that it is this creative seed of the Divine already implanted as the central nucleus of man's being, that is to be the true sovereign power of his earth life.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

THE DIVINE COLLABORATORS

IV

NOWHERE is the identity between the Mother's views (as held by her before her meeting with Sri Aurobindo) and those of Sri Aurobindo so strikingly significant as on the subject of the subconscient and the inconscient. Even if all other subjects were passed over, this alone would be enough to prove that the identity was not accidental, but rooted in the uniqueness of a mission which is fraught with the highest possibilities for human culture, and which could not be fulfilled except by their collaboration. The identity of their views was an outer expression of the identity of their beings, and a precondition for the accomplishment of their work. These two pioneer personalities, belonging to two opposite ends of the earth, met on the soil of resurgent India to sow the seeds of a new, a divine humanity and weave a luminous pattern of life for it. They did not meet to swell the traditional cry of world-renunciation and create a parked-up spiritual atmosphere for preparing a few souls to cross over the dark waters of life and reach the haven of Light beyond. They did not meet to widen the gulf between the secular and the spiritual, or preach a shallow, spiritual culture which would combine the two in a clumsy practical compromise, such as is fondly advocated by the modern idealists. They met to help man live in God and God in man; to convert human life into a vehicle of the divine Light and human nature into divine nature. They met to declare that Spirit and Matter, Heaven and Earth, the One and the many are essentially one, and that their oneness can be dynamically expressed in every movement of human life. It was for the complete transformation of homo sapiens and his ascent into the Divine Life that they have laboured for long years of unrelaxed collaboration. But the transformation is impossible without a radical dealing with the very base of human life and nature. This base, as both of them realised early in their lives, is subconscient and, deeper down, inconscient, and the source and store-house of most of the invisible forces which move man-

kind and prolong in it the residual life of the plant and the animal; and they bent their energies to the conquest and conversion of this nether base as much as to the bringing down of the Supermind, by whose omnipotence alone can this conquest and conversion be effected.

Obviously, it was a new work entailing infinite difficulties. Even the conversion of the individual subconscient has hardly ever been tackled with any conclusive thoroughness since the short-lived heyday of the great but tragic Tantric experiment, let alone the conversion of the collective subconscient. The dominant trend of most of the spiritual disciplines being otherworldly and escapist, the impurities of human nature were not traced to their ultimate roots, but lashed or lulled and left to seethe or slumber in their unlit depths. It was, indeed, deemed an achievement if the inner consciousness could be separated from the turmoil of the outer and launched upon the Infinite,—the outer, thus abandoned and discouraged, usually lapsed into a chafing quiescence or, in some cases, consented to undergo just a modicum of purification. But there was no question of a radical transmutation of the very substance of the base and a definitive triumph over the ignorance and inertia of the material part of human nature.

Significantly enough, both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo started their spiritual careers with a clear perception of the subconscient and the inconscient and their immense hold on the motor springs of human nature; and they resolved to make them the targets of their most determined and sustained assaults. Without knowing each other, they yet continued their efforts on identical lines; and when they met, their efforts were fused into one mighty churning of the dragon foundation of human life. They strove not only for the triumph of the soul in the kingdom of Light, but also—and more—for the triumph of God in the kingdom of the material life. They strove, both of them, with an astonishing equipollence of intuitive knowledge, for the complete illumination of the material life and an unflawed manifestation of the Divine on earth—an Epiphany in transfigured humanity.

Human reason understands moral self-discipline, which is, to quote William James's apt words, "but as a plaster hiding a sore it can never cure". It understands too something of religious fervour in which the fire of Godward emotions burns up some of the dross of human nature. But it has no idea of the elemental forces that go to constitute human nature, and does not know from what murky depths they emerge into overt play. When it sees falsehood, corruption, dishonesty and cruelty running rampant in

civilised human society,—the animal completely unleashed—it wonders how these brute passions could subsist along with so much of intellectual and cultural advancement. When an unsophisticated man of ethical culture hears of great scientists (science is the parent of culture, it is claimed) betraying the political or military secrets of their own motherland; eminent university professors (the universities, it is asserted, are the radiating centres of knowledge) found guilty of flagrant moral depravity, and university students manhandling their teachers or making raids into the hostels of the opposite sex in broad day light and in brazen defiance of all restraints of morality and decorum; when he sees most of the modern educationists, politicians, sociologists—all men of light and leading—competing with each other in the fruitful arts of lying and hypocrisy, and pursuing a career of unbridled power-lust and vile self-seeking; and above all, when he thinks of the brutalities that are being perpetrated by responsible men from day to day in cold blood and even in the very name of peace and patriotism, he cannot but reel under their shock. Is it civilisation, he asks in amazement, that turns man into beasts of prey? Is it culture that flourishes on their aboriginal passions? Is it education that educes all that is dark and barbarious in them and yokes their intellectual powers—God's precious gift to them—to the service of their lowest self?

Human reason can only marvel, but find no solution of this distressing problem; for the solution lies beyond it. It lies in a double discovery: the discovery of that which is beyond the level of our mental consciousness and of that which is below it. Our present active self is but an outer fringe and surface of our far-ranging being which plunges into remote depths below and spreads high above in the infinitudes of the Spirit. The motive forces of our thoughts and actions, the impulses that drive us and the desires that dictate and direct our movements, all come from sources hidden from our view; and unless we plumb the depths and scale the heights, we live in a woeful ignorance of our self, of our nature and of the world in which we are set to evolve. Most of these motive forces surge up from the subconscious and the inconscient layers of our being, and if we want to transform our nature, it cannot be done by any surface adjustments and reforms, but by a thorough exploration of those submerged regions as well as of the superconscious, and the conversion of all blind and brute energies into their divine counterparts. But if the being of man refuses to exceed its present mental limitations and ascend into the Infinite and Eternal, it will go on pandering to the base passions of its animal self with all the

formidable powers of its developing intellectuality, as we see it doing today, and a universal resurgence of the animal in man with an almost limitless potentiality for evil and destruction will be the unavoidable dire result.

But that is not to be. Man's evolution cannot thus be wrecked on the shoals of his animal self. His inherent divinity must awake and assert itself. He must one day come to realise that his mind, however developed, is a tool of the obscure forces of the material life which emerge from the nether reaches of his being and express themselves in his character, temperament and action. This realisation will arouse in him an aspiration for freedom and mastery by his soul's union with the Infinite and Eternal. It was precisely to help this spiritual freedom and mastery of man by his union and communion with the Divine that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo undertook the tremendous labour of illumining and transforming the Subconscious and the Inconscious.

"The subconscious is the main support of all habitual movements, especially the physical and lower vital movements. When something is thrown out of the vital or physical, it very usually goes down into the subconscious and remains there as if in seed and comes up again when it can. That is the reason why it is so difficult to get rid of habitual vital movements or to change the character; for, supported or refreshed from this source, preserved in this matrix, your vital movements, even when suppressed or repressed, surge up again and recur. The action of the subconscious is irrational, mechanical, repetitive. It does not listen to reason or the mental will. It is only by bringing the higher light and force into it that it can change."¹

If we read these words of Sri Aurobindo along with those written by the Mother in her Prayer of Nov. 25, 1913, we cannot help being struck by the identity of their views and experiences:

"The greatest enemy of a silent contemplation turned towards Thee is certainly this constant subconscious registering of the multitude of phenomena with which we are put into contact. So long as we are occupied with cerebral activity, our conscious thought veils for us this excessive activity of our subconscious reception of things...It is only

¹ *Bases of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo

when we silence our active thought...that we find surging from all sides the multitude of little subconscient notations which often drown us in their over-flowing stream. This is why it happens, as soon as we try to enter into the silence of deep contemplation, that we are assailed by innumerable thoughts—if thoughts they can be called—which do not in the least interest us, do not represent for us any action of desire, any conscious attachment, but which only prove to us our inability to control the receptivity, we might say, mechanical, of our subconscient.”

It is clear from these quotations that no attempt at a radical reform of human nature or a reconstruction of human society that fails to explore, illumine and conquer the subconscient and the inconscient can ever succeed. The dark depths hold the secret of our evolutionary growth as well as dangerous explosives that may disrupt our being. We are moved by their obscure forces, even in spite of ourselves; even when we think we are guided by our own will and intelligence. “We are governed”, says Sri Aurobindo, “by the subconscient and the subliminal even in our conscious existence and in our very self-mastery and self-direction we are only instruments of what seems to us the Inconscient within us.” And yet, “the principle and power of perfection are there in the subconscient, but wrapped up in the tegument or veil of the lower Maya.”¹ Voicing the same truth, the Mother says, “...from many points of view our subconscient has greater knowledge than our habitual consciousness.”²

Locating and describing the subconscient the Mother says in her Prayer of March 13, 1914, just a fortnight before her fateful meeting with Sri Aurobindo:

“The subconscient is the intermediate zone between precise perception and the total darkness of the ignorance; it is probable that the majority of beings, even of human beings, live constantly in this subconscience; few emerge from it.”

It is interesting to compare with these words what Sri Aurobindo says on the same point:

“The Subconscient lies between this Inconscient and the conscious mind,

¹ *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

² *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

life and body. It contains the potentiality of all the primitive reactions to life which struggle out to the surface from the dull and inert strands of Matter and form by a constant development a slowly evolving and self-formulating consciousness; it contains them not as ideas, perceptions or conscious reactions but as fluid substance of these things. But also all that is consciously experienced sinks down into the subconscious, not as precise though submerged memories but as obscure yet obstinate impressions of experience, and these can come up at any time as dreams, as mechanical repetitions of past thought, feelings, action, etc., as complexes exploding into action and event, etc., etc. The subconscious is the main cause why all things repeat themselves and nothing ever gets changed except in appearance. It is the cause why people say character cannot be changed, the cause also of the constant return of things one hoped to have got rid of for ever. All seeds are there and all samskaras of the mind, vital and body,—it is the main support of death and disease and the last fortress (seemingly impregnable) of the Ignorance. All too that is suppressed without being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as seed ready to surge up or sprout up at any moment.”¹

The goal of evolution, as conceived by Sri Aurobindo, is the complete conversion of the subconscious and the inconscient into luminous consciousness, and the principal means to attain it is a descent of the supreme divine Light into them. “Even the inconscient and subconscious have to become conscious in us, susceptible to the higher light, no longer obstructive to the fulfilling action of the Consciousness-Force, but more and more a mould and lower basis of the Spirit.”² This is the conquest that the Mother speaks of in many of her Prayers,—the conquest of the divine Light over the sombre night of the subconscious and the inconscience.

“...And all Thy (God’s) effort consists in drawing the substance from this first obscurity so as to make it be born into consciousness. Passion itself is preferable to inconscience. We must therefore constantly march to the conquest of this universal bedrock of inconscience, and making our organism the instrument, transform it little by little into luminous consciousness.”³

She speaks elsewhere of the subconscious passivity “which we have to

¹ *Bases of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo

² *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Chap. XXVI

³ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

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conquer and awaken to the consciousness of Thy divine Presence,"¹ and calls this conquest "the work to be accomplished, the mission to be fulfilled upon the earth."

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are both agreed that so long as we live under the dismal sway of the subconscious and the inconscient, we are almost amorphous in our psychological being, repeating indefinitely, helplessly, mechanically, the desires and cravings, the impulses and instincts, the passions and propensities which enter into us from the universal nature of Ignorance.

"To feel Thee and aspire for Thee, we must have emerged from the immense sea of the subconscious; we must have begun to crystallise, to define and so to know and then to give ourselves as that alone can give itself which belongs to itself. And how many efforts and struggles are needed to attain to this crystallisation, to come out of the amorphous middle state..."²

We do not remember having come across any instance of an organised spiritual campaign against the bedrock of the subconscious and the inconscient that can be cited along with that of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And yet it is the most momentous humanitarian work ever undertaken; for, without a complete transmutation of the basic stuff of human nature, it would be idle to dream of a happy and harmonious life on earth. Man can be redeemed and released into his inherent divinity only by the double discovery we have spoken of above, the discovery of the golden summits of his being and the dark base from which he has started on his evolutionary pilgrimage. A simultaneous conquest of the summits and the base has to be attempted, if the integral being of man has to have an integral divine fulfilment in life. This is the fundamental perception upon which the work of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo has been progressing, and its consummation will be the manifestation of God in life, the life Divine. If we lose sight of this fundamental perception, we shall find ourselves lost in the many-sided vastness of the aim and the incalculable swing and sweep of the process of the Integral Yoga propounded by them. This perception was the well-spring of all the efforts of the Mother even when she knew nothing of Sri Aurobindo, and it ever has been the same in their unwearied collaboration.

RISHABHCHAND

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

² *ibid.*

THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

(Continued from the April issue)

THE WORLD AS MEANINGLESS, EVEN THOUGH REAL

WHETHER the world is real or unreal or indescribable, one thing is indisputably certain, and that is this that according to *Mayavada* the world-process is a meaningless appearance and our territorial life is, in the last analysis, no more than 'a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury and signifying nothing'. There is no purpose or will of the Supreme behind the cosmic process. The universe cannot, strictly speaking, be a mode of manifestation or self-revelation of the Absolute. Even the spiritual liberation of the individual is after all a meaningless affair. It is in effect the false liberation of a false individual from his false bondage in a false world. As Sri Aurobindo humourously puts it: "(by following Mayavada to its logical extreme) we arrive at the escape of an illusory non-existent soul from an illusory non-existent bondage in an illusory non-existent world as the supreme Good which that non-existent soul has to pursue!"¹ Even if some kind of reality be accorded to the individual soul and the world, what significance can be there in the individual soul descending into the world and getting involved in its meshes only in order to go out of it again as its supreme goal? Then again, the sort of reality which is accorded to the phenomenal world is only an euphemistic expression to cover its utter untruth and un-reality. The Mayavadin is never tired of re-iterating that while the world is real from the standpoint of the Ignorance, it melts into thin air on the luminous apprehension of the supreme Truth. Now, to speak of the reality of that which is admittedly unreal from the standpoint of the supreme Truth and whose presented appearance is conditioned by the operation of Ignorance, is only a sort of accommodation to popular prejudices. Nothing

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 59

can be said to be real in the strict sense of the term which does not correspond to some truth in the nature of ultimate Reality or to some purpose of the Supreme.

THE CLASSICAL ANALOGIES OF MAYAVADA EXAMINED

It will be well to examine here some of the analogies which are frequently employed as illustrative supports of the doctrine of unreality of the world. The world is sometimes compared to dreams, sometimes to illusory experiences, and sometimes again to temporary modifications of some substantial entity such as waves of the sea, ornaments made of gold, etc. We propose to briefly consider here the above-mentioned analogies, and see what light they throw upon the status of the external world.

Let us first take up the dream-analogy. It is contended that just as our nocturnal dreams melt away like phantoms immediately we wake up in the morning, so also the world of manifoldness is revealed in its utter falsity on our realisation of the supreme Truth or Brahman. Our embodied existence is a terrible nightmare that melts away in the light of the self-luminous Truth. Now, the question which thrusts itself on our mind is: Is the dream unreal and void of significance simply because it disappears when we pass into a different order of experience on waking? What, if the dream has a value and significance all its own, so that even though it may appear unreal when judged by the pragmatic standard of wakeful experience, it is in truth one among many forms of manifestation of the all-comprehensive Real? Everybody knows that Art vanishes at the cold touch of Science. When one applies the scientific standard to the world of artistic creation, one is sure to be disappointed. Yet there can be no gainsaying the fact that the creations of Art have a unique significance of their own, and that they often embody deep flashes of insight into the heart of the universe. Similarly, the mere fact of disappearance of our waking consciousness of the objective manifold on the attainment of the undifferentiated unity of Nirguna Brahman provides no warrant for condemning the manifold to the status of an unreal and meaningless appearance. Had this criterion been true, then the undifferentiated awareness of Brahman also should have been condemned in view of the fact that it disappears when the yogi comes back from his state of *samādhi* into his physical consciousness. The truth perhaps is that differentiated world-consciousness and undifferentiated Brahman-realisation are neither of them unreal and unmeaning, but are

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rather two distinct forms of expression of the same supreme Reality; they correspond, as Sri Aurobindo would say, to two different aspects of the Supreme (Purushottama or Prabrahman),—the former to the world-sustaining creative or dynamic aspect, and the latter to the world-negating aspect of static absorption. This is clearly realised when one obtains the integral vision of the Supreme, from whose standpoint there is no incompatibility between the differentiated and the undifferentiated types of experience. The dream-analogy thus goes to exemplify the truth that the apparent incompatibility of two forms of experience may be an indication not of the utter unreality of one of them but rather of the diversity of their order and structure. The analogy of dream, thoroughly analysed, lends little support to the way of thinking which insists upon dismissing the world as a meaningless and unreal appearance.

SECRETS OF THE DREAMLAND

The hidden secrets of the dream-world have only begun to be gradually unravelled. What modern psychology has lately been able to discover in this field affords us a glimpse of the vast unknown regions which are yet to be explored. Recent psychological excursions into the realm of the Unknown have brought it out that our dreams have a coherence and connected significance of their own. Freud discovers the key to the interpretation of dreams in the irrepressible sex-energy; for him, our dreams are indirect forms of wish-fulfilment or modes of expression of the repressed libido. This is undoubtedly true in regard to many of our dreams, though Freud goes too far in the first flush of a new discovery. Jung considers dreams to be neither reproductions of the memories of the past, nor mere unmeaning and arbitrary constructions of fancy. They are, in his opinion, unsophisticated manifestations of the unconscious creative activity.¹ They are in the nature of compensation-functions or artificial substitutes for the unfulfilled adaptation to reality. Jung further maintains that dreams not only express the nature of the individual who dreams but have also a collective significance. Certain universal motives or "archetypes" in the sense of forms or images of a collective nature such as occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths, are, in his view, largely operative in the formation of dreams.²

¹ *Analytical Psychology*, p. 356

² *Psychology and Religion* by Jung, p. 63

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It may be remarked that although modern psychology invests our dreams with a deep significance, still that significance is after all subjective and not objective. Dreams are supposed to be significant creations of the dynamic unconscious, whether merely individual or racial and collective, but that does not make them objectively real. But, what, if reality be only another name for significant creation of the spirit or psyche, whether conscious or unconscious? That is precisely what epistemological idealism affirms. Adopting the standpoint of epistemological idealism it may be said that while the external world is the result of the creative activity of the understanding which works through the mechanism of categories, dreams are the outcome of a purely unconscious creative activity of the mind guided perhaps by a different purpose. Let us however turn here to Sri Aurobindo's own view in regard to the nature and significance of dreams. He emphatically maintains that waking and dreaming represent different orders of one and the same Reality, or that they are states of consciousness such as constitute different grades of our self-experience and world-experience.¹

The bulk of our dreams are, in his opinion, "subconscious dreams" in so far as they are expressions of the subconscient which is a portion, the blind and obscure portion, of the vast Subliminal, and which may be said to lie on the border line between the Subliminal and the surface mentality. It is these subconscious dreams which largely lend themselves to an interpretation on Freudian lines. But sometimes our dreams are in the nature of direct expressions of the true Subliminal, that vast and luminous sea of consciousness which exists behind the veil. These dreams bear traces of activity of the inner subliminal mind, the inner vital, the inner senses, etc. Our knottiest problems are often solved in our subliminal dreams,—problems which persistently baffled the powers of the waking consciousness. Sometimes again these dreams occur to us in the shape of warnings, premonitions, prophetic utterances, glimpses into the future, and the life. As the subliminal is not confined to the material plane only, these dreams do also often represent records of happenings seen or experienced by us on other planes of our own being or of universal being into which we may enter on the automatic stilling of the surface mentality during sleep. In all such cases our dreams are unquestionably endowed with a deep objective significance.

It is evident from the foregoing that the dream-analogy is not at all available as an illustration of the lack of significance and reality of the external

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 202

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world. Both the dream-world and the waking world must rather be accepted as different forms of manifestation of the same ultimate reality. It may, however, be contended that just as our dreams are not themselves realities but only a transcript of reality, a system of symbol images, similarly our waking experience of the universe is also not a reality, but only a transcript of reality, a series or collection of symbol images. Now, taking for granted that our waking experience is a sense-transcript or a system of symbol images, and not a direct apprehension of an objective reality, it ought to be pointed out that the theory of Illusionism does not receive any support therefrom. A symbol is after all a notation of something, and even if our images are not quite exact and adequate, yet what they endeavour to body forth are realities, not illusions. "But in the theory of Illusion the only reality is an indeterminate featureless pure Existence, Brahman, and there is no possibility of its being translated or mistranslated into a system of symbol-figures, for that could only be if this Existence had some determinate contents or some unmanifested truths of its being which could be transcribed into the forms or names given to them by our consciousness."¹ Sri Aurobindo however does not accept the image-view of external perception. Much with the emphasis of a modern realist he says that we do not merely read a translation or sense-transcript of the reality, but look through the sense-image to the reality. "We experience a real universe through our imaged sense-transcript by the aid of the intuition and the reason,—an intuition which gives us the touch of things and a reason which investigates their truth by its conceptive knowledge."

THE ANALOGY OF PERCEPTUAL ILLUSIONS

The dream-analogy having failed, let us now turn to the analogy of sense-illusion, and see whether and how far it is applicable to the world. The analogies of rope-snake, oyster-silver, mirage, etc. are frequently cited by the *Māyāvādīn* as illustrations of the indescribable or existent-non-existent type of nature of the world. The first two are instances of what Sri Aurobindo calls "mental hallucination" which consists in "taking for an objective fact a thing which is a subjective structure of the mind"²; and the last is an example of what Sri Aurobindo calls "visual hallucination" which is the

¹ *The Life Divine* Vol. II (1), p. 204

² *ibid.*

same thing as an erroneous construction of the senses or as a misplacement of sensuous objects. None of these illusions is an instance of absolute or total creation as is the case with *Māyā*. A mirage is the image of a city or oasis or running water perceived in the desert air. It is perhaps true that there is an element of creation here, a creation of ignorance, in so far as the sheet of water perceived in desert—a unique spatio-temporal phenomenon—is not to be identified with water existing elsewhere. But it is equally true that the mind can perceive water in the desert only because there is real water existing elsewhere. Had there not been real water existing elsewhere, there could not have been any false image of water in the desert to delude the mind with a false sense of reality. When therefore the analogy of mirage is applied to the world, the only legitimate conclusion that follows is that both Brahman and the universe are equally real just as desert and water are equally real, the only thing unreal being the perception of the universe on the locus of Brahman or the perception of Brahman in the form of the universe, like the perception of the desert-water. The analogy, therefore, completely fails. *Māyā* is conceived as an original and all-originating Ignorance which creates entirely out of nothing the unreal appearance of the world to which nothing corresponds anywhere in the structure of ultimate reality.

“Mental hallucinations” prove no better support of the doctrine of *Māyā*. The phenomenon of rope-snake illusion is most frequently quoted as an illustration of the operation of *Māyā*. It is maintained by the *Māyāvādīn* that the snake is a unique creation of *ajñāna* (ignorance) which is mistakenly superimposed on the rope. True, the illusory snake is not merely a subjective image existing in the mind; nor is it an elsewhere-snake revived through memory, or, the ghost of a snake experienced in the past; nor is it an elsewhere-snake supernally presented to *sāmānyalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*, i.e., extraordinary perception mediated by the perception of a universal. The snake which I see is a unique spatio-temporal particular which is here and now before me. But still there can be no denying the fact that in creating this particular snake, *ajñāna* had to draw its raw material from the mind’s stock of images or *samskāras*. A child having as yet no experience of the snake will never perceive a rope as a snake. The mind must at least be said to be indebted to its past experiences of the snake for the snake-pattern in the light of which the presented datum is at the moment interpreted. It is thus clear that our mind is at best an instrumental demiurge or an intermediary creator; it can never create except by the aid of some raw

THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

material ready to hand, and except on the basis of some presented datum whose vaguely apprehended features set in motion its creative or form-imposing mechanism. So the errors of perception of sense-illusions which result from the imperfect functioning of the sense-mind can by no means be said to illustrate the operation of that original creative Ignorance which *Māyā* is supposed to be. In creating the cosmic manifold, *Māyā* has not to acknowledge indebtedness to any alien source for either the material or the formative pattern; the whole thing, matter and form, is created out of nothing. Nor do the creations of *Māyā* bear the slightest resemblance to any inherent features of Brahman which is an absolutely featureless unity; but yet the created diversity is supposed somehow to be superimposed upon the latter.

IS THE WORLD A COSMIC IMAGINATION?

But what if the world be, in truth, neither a dream nor an illusion, but rather the outcome of some cosmic imagination? Cannot the mind's faculty of imagination be regarded as a fit illustration of the operation of *Māyā*? It however seems to us that the analogy of imagination is inapplicable to *Māyā* for the four following reasons. First, mental imaginations are mainly constructions on the basis of material derived from actual experience and knowledge. The mermaid, the angel, the griffin, the chimera,—these are all fantastic modes of combination of the elements of sense-experience. But *Māyā* is conceived as itself the stuff of its own creations. Secondly, imagination is in the nature of a supplement to our mind's limited powers of cognition and effective action. The flights of imagination are just attempts to make up the deficiencies of our mental capacity. As the mind's power of knowledge is circumscribed, it has to imagine or conjecture whether this or that may not be true; and "as its power to actualise is cramped and confined by the material world's oppositions, it figures subjective actualisations to satisfy its will of creation and delight of self-presentation."¹

So it follows that to treat *Māyā* as a cosmic power of imagination, is to suggest by implication that Brahman is limited in its power of knowledge and power of effective self-realisation. Thirdly, all imagination is representation of possibilities; and possibilities are to be treated not as mere unrealities but as elements in the permanent constitution of reality. Imagination is the mind's way of summoning out of Being its infinite possibilities.

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. II. (1), p. 214

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It lies in discovering or capturing the unknown possibilities, the "may-be"s or "might-be"s of the Infinite. Imaginations as apprehensions of possibilities do often exercise a pressure on the world's actualities; some of them, especially such persistent ones as those of travelling in the air and talking at a distance, are in due course actualised; but more are condemned to sterility because they do not enter into the figure or scheme of the present creation. But can *Māyā* be likewise treated as an uncertain mode of apprehension of the unknown possibilities inherent in reality? Imagination itself is in its nature a substitute for a truer consciousness's faculty of intuition of possibility;¹ it is a necessity for a partial being with an ignorant consciousness. So to assimilate *Māyā* to imagination is surely to belie its character as the sole dynamic and creative principle. Finally, imagination does often function as a faculty through which forms and powers of other domains than that of the physical actuality communicate with our mental being. In this capacity, imagination is assuredly an organ of catching glimpses of the Truth, and not a source of unreal appearance.

THE GOLD AND ORNAMENTS ANALOGY

Before this chapter we should consider another class of analogies which are often cited to illustrate the unreality and evanescent character of the world. It is said that the relation of the world to Brahman, or, of the Many to the One, is analogous to the relation between the pot and the clay of which it is made, or between ornaments and the gold out of which they are fashioned, or that between waves and the sea of which they are modifications. Just as ornaments are, it is contended, unreal in so far as they are passing and transitory formation, taking shape out of gold only to be dissolved again into it, so also the cosmic manifold is held to be an evanescent unreality. A little reflection will, however, show that the above analogies far from lending support to the doctrine of unreality of the world rather knock the bottom out of it. They clearly show that *Māyāvāda* rests upon a confusion between derivative reality and unreality. Derivative reality or transitory existence is not the same thing as unreality or non-existence. Ornaments which are made of the real substance of gold must *ipso facto* be accounted real. Even when an ornament, say a bracelet, is dissolved or re-absorbed into the original substance of gold, that does not take away

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. II (I) p. 216

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from its erstwhile existence in the shape of a bracelet. A bracelet does in fact eternally exist as an inherent possibility of gold; when it is fashioned by the goldsmith in its distinctive form it passes from the domain of possibility into the region of actuality,—it emerges out of the unmanifest into the distinctness of manifestation. When again the bracelet is dissolved, it relapses from the sphere of manifestation to the state of non-manifestation. What is here said of the relation between ornaments and gold is also true of the relation between earthen jars and the clay, or that between waves and the sea. It is everywhere the relation of derivative and dependent reality to one original reality capable of self-manifestation in various forms, and not the relation of illusory superimposition to one absolutely indeterminate reality. If Brahman is real, then the multitudinous names and forms of the world of which Brahman is admitted to be the material cause must also be real. If the individual names and forms are temporal or transitory, that only signifies that they belong to a different order of reality. But nonetheless they must be real manifestations of the eternal possibilities inherent in Brahman. The world as the totality of all names and forms cannot be dubbed as merely transitory in the sense in which passing phenomena are transitory. While Brahman enjoys timeless eternity, the world-process or the creative advance of Nature may be described as a temporal eternity. The derivation of the world from Brahman is to be construed as eternal logical dependence, and not as origination or emergence in time.

H. D. CHAUDHURI

(to continue)

REVIEWS

(1)

Philosophy and Life and Other Papers. By *J. C. P. d'Andrade*. Pp. xxxviii+240, 1952. Publishers: Orient Longmans Ltd. Price Rs. 10/-

This book, published by Orient Longmans, Ltd., is a collection of papers written by the late Prof. d'Andrade, of Elphinstone College, Bombay, and published by his pupils after his death. The book is divided into four parts, Part I dealing with the value of philosophy, Part II with the problems of philosophy, Part III, bearing the title "Some Philosophers" and containing critical essays on four philosophers, Spinoza, Ward, Bradley and Russell, and Part IV containing a number of miscellaneous essays. Besides these, there is a Foreword written by the Rev. Dr. John Mckenzie and two Prefaces written respectively, by H. M. Seervai and Miss Panandikar, containing short accounts of the life and work of the author.

The first essay in the first part, which gives its title to the whole work, deals with the relation between philosophy and life. In it the author has shown that philosophy, to have any real value, must have an intimate connection with life. The modern tendency to separate philosophy from life has had, he says, very baneful effects. "The ancient philosophers lived their philosophy and were in consequence in earnest about it. When your theories are meant to be put into practice, you will take better care about them than when they are held as mere intellectual curiosities to be exhibited as expressions of your ingenuity or inventiveness". In fact, one of the main causes of the decline of philosophy in the West is the divorce of philosophy from life.

The second essay in this part, entitled "The revolt against metaphysics" is one of the best essays in the book. Here we see the truth of his remark in the first essay, namely, that the decline of philosophy in the West at present is mainly caused by the divorce of philosophy from life, for in logical positivism, which is the spearhead of the anti-metaphysical movement of

the present day, philosophy has been made a branch of mathematics and is completely cut off from all connection with life. To this logical positivism the author has dealt very severe blows and that, too, with the help of weapons taken from the armoury of logical positivism itself. Its view that what is empirically verifiable is alone meaningful, on the strength of which it claims to have demolished all metaphysics, itself rests as our author shows, on a proposition which is not empirically verifiable. "What", asks our author, "is the warrant for the positivist principle that only what is empirically verifiable is meaningful?... There is underlying this principle an assumption which means that only what is given in sense-experience is real or knowable. This is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, and if the logical positivists can make it, why cannot we make what assumptions we choose?" (p.31). He puts it further more tersely on the same page as follows: "Is the proposition of the logical positivist that only tautologous propositions and propositions of fact that are empirically verifiable are meaningful, itself either tautologous or an empirically verifiable proposition? It is certainly not tautologous, but is it empirically verifiable?" Ayer answers that it is a proposition of fact universally accepted. But our author points out that what is universally accepted is that tautologous and empirically verifiable propositions are meaningful, not that they alone are and no others. Further, "when the logical positivist says that only empirically verifiable propositions are meaningful, he holds that only what can be arrived at by scientific investigation is meaningful, but he forgets that scientific investigations involve principles which are not empirically verifiable, that everything in fact, even the behaviours of the lower animals, implies principles which are not empirically verifiable" (p.33).

In the first essay in Part II bearing the title "The principle of idealism", the author correctly observes that "much misunderstanding about the true nature of idealism would have been avoided if almost all idealists had not attempted to base it on the '*esse is percipi*' principle as their starting-point. This makes the realist think that all idealism is epistemological first and last, and that the so-called objective idealism of the Absolutists is either thinly disguised subjective idealism or else realism ashamed to call itself by its real name". But the manner in which he himself makes the distinction between subjective and objective idealism is itself not free from objection. For him the difference between the subjective and the objective idealist lies in the fact that while the subjective idealist interprets the formula "*esse is percipi*" as meaning that an object exists only so far as it is perceived,

THE ADVENT

the objective idealist asserts that "whatever else a real object may be, it must also have the characteristic of being perceived" (p.37). But to this statement most objective idealists will object. They will say, "Hang your '*esse is percipi*' principle. We do not hold it. For us '*percipi*' is no criterion of the existence of objects. Much more important for us is '*concipi*' or capacity of being conceived or thought. Moreover, the consciousness for which an object exists is, from our point of view, not the individual consciousness but an Objective or Absolute Consciousness!" The objective idealist thus does not consider the fact of being perceived a *conditio sine qua non* of the existence of an object. Moreover, he objects to the expression "whatever else an object may be". This expression, in the first place, is very vague; not only so, but it may mean also something which goes against all idealism. An object has got nothing in it which exists except for consciousness, the consciousness being not the consciousness of the individual but an objective or absolute consciousness. The objective idealist, in fact, posits an all-embracing Consciousness, of which the individual consciousness is only a partial manifestation. The main difference, therefore, between subjective and objective idealism lies in the fact, firstly, that unlike the former, the latter does not attach much importance to perception, as there are for it higher levels of consciousness even in the individual than perception, and it is by reference to these that objectivity is to be determined, if it is to be determined by reference to individual consciousness. But secondly, the measuring-rod for it by which objectivity is to be tested is not individual consciousness but an all-embracing universal consciousness, which may be called Objective or Absolute Consciousness.

The author, however, has correctly stated the position of objective idealism at p. 43, where he says, "This then is the real principle of idealism, that reality is a whole and teleologically continuous with the finite thinker." He further says, "The contention of the realist that whether reality is one or many must be left an open question is based on an ignorance of the true nature of scientific inquiry. All scientific inquiry has for its fundamental postulates the principle that everything has an explanation, that everything necessarily connects itself with everything else or with something else at least, so that we cannot rest until we have completely unified experience. To allow at the start that reality may be many, is almost to kill inquiry at its birth, for it is to admit the possibility of gaps, to introduce an irrational element and thus to put man to intellectual confusion" (pp. 43-44). This correctly states the position of absolute idealism based upon the principle.

of continuity or coherence, though it does not state correctly that of absolute idealism based upon the principle of emergence, such as that of Sri Aurobindo. The author finally identifies idealism with coherence, and the latter with monism, thus giving us the equation idealism=coherence=monism. As contrasted with it, according to him, realism=pluralism. Although we agree that all realism is pluralism, and although we also agree that all true idealism must be monistic, yet we cannot endorse the author's view that all monism must necessarily be based upon the principle of coherence.

Space does not permit us to notice all the essays in this book, although one feels tempted to do so because the essays, with only a few exceptions, are all of very high quality. The high quality of the essays is due to the fact that throughout the author has exhibited a very clear-cut standpoint, from which he has never deviated, and where he has criticized the views of others, he has done so fearlessly, though at the same time with a great sense of fairness. A departure from his usual sense of fairness, however, we notice in his criticism of Bertrand Russell's book *History of Western Philosophy*, which forms one of the essays in the third part of this book. About Russell's book he says, "Apart from his (Russell's) wrong conception of philosophy, which puts him wholly out of court in judging the great transcendental philosophers, Russell has other serious defects which disqualify him from being a reliable historian of philosophy. He has no historic sense and often criticizes a philosopher as if he lived in our own time and were bound to know the recent developments, especially those of Russell's own school. He cannot sympathetically enter into thought which is opposed to his own and interpret it with fairness and understanding. He is too dogmatic and cocksure in his verdicts as if the final stage in philosophic development had already been reached and all views in conflict with it were forever doomed to be false" (pp. 176-77). This is undoubtedly the language of prejudice. In justification of it, the author says, (p. 172) "My review is therefore going to be iconoclastic, and I feel all the more at ease in taking this attitude because Russell himself has done so in relation to a much greater philosopher, Plato...". Russell may have done great injustice to Plato, but that is no justification for the author doing the same to Russell, for two wrongs never make one right.

In the fourth part, in the essay on *Culture and Character*, the author has defined culture as follows: "Culture is not mere learning. It is the moulding of mind and the formation of intellectual habits by which we are ever prepared to enter into the right point of view concerning any question. Cul-

ture broadens, deepens, and strengthens our minds, so that we are in a position to consider our interests in all their bearings, to see things in their true proportions, and so to have insight into the significance of alternative courses of action." How rare indeed is culture of this kind among the educated classes in these days!

Altogether the book is a very fine collection of philosophical essays, which, though written at different times, yet exhibit a fundamental unity of thought, which is due to the author's own clear-cut idealistic standpoint, from which he has never departed in the slightest degree. It is certainly a book of which every public library should possess a copy.

S. K. MAITRA

(2)

De la Vie Intérieure. Choix de textes, edited by *Jacques Masui* (Cahiers du Sud, Paris).

"The spirit bloweth where it listeth....Our times are evidently the least propitious that one could imagine for the Inner Life; so we may presume the spirit is awaiting its hour and is working behind the veil"....This is the hope that has prompted the collection of these forty odd extracts under the above title. The extracts are mainly from European sources: Hugo and Rousseau, George Russell (A.E.) and Mallarmé, Nietzsche and Baudelaire and Dostoevsky and Edgar Allan Poe, — these, and many other names not so well-known to us figure among the pages. There are too extracts from the Kena Upanishad, one each from St. Theresa and Raman Maharshi and Sri Ramakrishna. There is an extract from one of Sri Aurobindo's letters describing His first major experience of the Silence, and two others, one from the Life Divine and a longer one from the Human Cycle, pointing to the ideal before man. But the main emphasis is on modern Europe and its recent attempts to get into the Beyond.

"It is now more than a century that we have been trying to fathom the mysteries of cerebration, but nothing," says our editor, "has been revealed on the secret of the profound workings of Thought. We are still where we were." And yet, "in all ages, men have assured us that man has the power to be himself and also more than himself, he has the faculty of getting out of

himself or get above his ordinary life in brief moments of varying intensity." What then are we to do? Can we find a way? A way must be found, for "the call to the Inner Life is not a mere refuge for the souls who are in pain; it is the very mark of the genius of man....It is the nostalgia of that super-nature from where we come and from which we draw like lightning flashes the universal and supra-individual values that go to make up all true culture and civilisation". Man in the West, so our editor tells us, has become conscious of the immense dangers of his power and he is trying to "re-integrate" himself. "He shall never succeed in that until he grows in his inner life and widens his consciousness and his supra-mental powers."

How is he to set about this business? The ancients, says our author, had developed certain faculties which enabled them to get into contact with the higher worlds. But modern man with all his paraphernalia of science has no longer the knowledge or the vision: his brain now "functions as a laboratory." The rules for the entry into the Inner Life have so far remained the monopoly of the religions, "as if the subscription to a credo had alone the power to open up the higher planes of our being". Poets and theologians and psychologists have all tried to explain each in his own way wherein lies the path, but all have failed. A new psychology, the school of Jung, is now trying to take a deeper view and seeking for a clue among the ancient disciplines of the West. But the author asks, "Will it succeed in getting the "centres" to work, for they can be opened up only by a discipline and transformation of the whole of our being".

The solution is obvious. Our editor too seems to recognise it when in his comments on one of the extracts from Sri Aurobindo he declares, "His psychology of mysticism which has been both thought out and lived is the best modern guide to the exploration of the higher planes and to the permanence of the higher states of consciousness".

Now let us see what the extracts have actually to say. It is idle to expect that they would show i.e. chalk out the way for us. They are mostly records of experiences that had come unbidden, and their chief interest lies in this that they describe in vivid terms some of the finest moments in the lives of some of the finest souls. A few indeed like George Russell (A.E.) seem to have followed a kind of yogic discipline and arrived at some degree of conscious control; others like Baudelaire and some of the less well-known figures made experiments with drugs and narcotics to have experiences of an abnormal kind and these have led them almost to the verge of collapse. But to most the happiest moments came as if unbidden and left an unforgettable

mark. Rousseau had them during his solitary reveries in the Isle of Saint Pierre and his soul found an "assiette assez solide pour s'y reposer toute entière" (a base solid enough to rest wholly upon). Hugo was caught alone in the midst of the dark and suddenly

"Il ne restait de moi qu'une soif de connaître,
Une aspiration vers ce qui pourrait être"...

(Nothing remained of me but a thirst to know, an aspiration towards what might be) Mallarmé found his "Conception Divine" after a year spent in agony, and he burst forth into poetry "d'une pureté que l'homme n'a pas atteinte—et n'atteindra peut-être jamais" (of a purity man has not reached and will perhaps never reach). Joyce and Allan Poe have found their best moments during the few minutes between sleep and awakening, when "the soul is bathed in dew and the limbs are washed in cool pale waves". Nietzsche had his inspirations in lightning-like flashes when "on entend, on ne cherche plus" (one hears and one seeks no more). And so with the rest.

The extracts chosen are vivid enough in their power and there is no denying their sincerity. But the question with which the book starts remains unanswered till the end. Moments of felicity are all to the good: they are a promise and a pointer to the destiny of the race. But however widespread or frequent in their recurrence, they continue to remain abnormal states: "The higher life is still only a thing superimposed on the lower, a permanent intruder upon our normal existence."¹ The answer cannot be found by a study of the poets and dreamers in their best moments. "We have...to return to the pursuit of an ancient secret which man, as a race, has seen only obscurely and followed after lamely,...the ideal of the Kingdom of God, the secret of the reign of the Spirit over mind and life and body".² Till this secret is found and applied, the Inner Life will remain a phantasy. Still there is some value even in a phantasy, for it may awaken some to the need of looking beyond the nose. The editor will have justified his labour if he attains that end.

S. K. BANERJI

¹ *The Human Cycle*, Chapter XXLI

² *ibid.*

(3)

Europe between two World Wars (1918-1939). By Prof. Sailendra Nath Dhar, M.A. Published by B.G. Paul & Co., Madras 1. Pages 608+IV (Demi), Price Rs. 12.

There are occasions in the lives of men and nations when Destiny knocks at the gates, when opportunities present themselves for worthwhile achievement. But across the sea of forces through which so many possibilities strive to effectuate themselves, few among us are able to see clearly and realise the significance of the hour. Most fail to seize the pregnant moment and betray the chance offered to them by the Higher Power. One such supreme moment in world-history arrived at the end of the First World War when there was placed in the hands of the victorious statesmen of the Allies an unprecedented, vast opportunity to replace the hitherto fortuitous and wasteful politico-economic set-up of the world by a new community of peoples ordered on recognised principles of harmony, progress and Peace. But the statesmen turned out to be politicians and collaborated to perpetrate the political monstrosity of *Versailles* which held Europe in its affliction for full twenty-one years before it was wiped out by another cataclysm precipitated by the forces that were released into action on the very day of the 'peace settlement'. The book under review is a detailed account of this concatenation of events that make the history of Europe between the two world wars. Prof. Sailendra Nath Dhar has drawn upon the available documentary records, with telling effect, in exposing the sordid intrigues and dishonest bargainings that went on in the chancellories of Europe behind the facade of idealistic proclamations.

The destruction of aggressive militarism of Germany, the collapse of the three ramshackle empires of Austro-Hungary, the Ottoman and the Czar, the Russian revolution—all these ushered in mighty forces of immense potentialities for the building of a new era in the political evolution of the world. The pronouncements of President Wilson had raised great hopes among subject peoples and held the promise of free scope for an unfettered development of diverse nationalities on healthy principles of self-determination. And what was most important, the idea of the League of Nations began to take concrete shape.

In a very interesting chapter on the subject, the author traces the beginnings

of the Idea of an International Organisation as far back as the *De Civitate Dei* of St. Augustine and even earlier in the 'endeavours of Greek states of the fifth century B.C. to perpetuate the League formed to fight the Persians under Xerxes and Darius.' The President had set his heart and did succeed, we must admit, in giving living form to the Idea that had been labouring to realise itself for centuries. The first great step had been taken and further steps were made possible. The organisation may have turned out to be simply an otiose appendage of the oligarchy of Powers that had won the War; that was not due to any inherent unsoundness in the Idea, but rather to its insincere application by the human instruments. However, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, the League was a definite step in advance and its very failure has made possible the rise of another Body, more sound in its constitution and more wide in its powers, the U.N.O. This new international edifice has doubtless its shortcomings; but it has its strong points and achievements as well. The Idea has come to stay; the need of a world-organisation to hold together a comity of free nations for their common good and happiness has come to be recognised by every one; there is going to be no turning away from it. The U.N.O. shall either develop into a more effective Body expressing the will of the united peoples for a world-union or it will be substituted by another that will fulfil the demands of Nature in evolution.

We anticipated a good deal. All that the Allied statesmen succeeded in doing after interminable conferences and conclaves on the termination of hostilities, was the imposition of the *Peace Settlement* of Versailles on Germany and her former allies. The rest, however good it may have been otherwise, was subsidiary to, and in fact designed to keep the wheel of the *dictat* (as it was called by the Germans) relentlessly moving. It was indeed a vindictive peace. The author has narrated in detail the inevitable consequences of the enforcement of the Treaty and the reactions that erupted all over Europe in the political, economic and social spheres of national and international life. The short-sighted bungling and mishandling of the Bolshevik Revolution by the Allied leadership served only to aggravate the situation and the continent was strewn with the wrecks of Democracies, some infant, some still-born, some half-dead; the political evolution of the individual and the society seemed to have received a severe set back with the rise of Dictatorships almost everywhere and it needed another world war to wipe out this fungus growth and set the peoples once again on the road to a hopeful future.

If today the world is faced with the prospect of still another War, man has himself to blame. The author observes, with a note of poignancy:

"It is said that in the sands of the Sahara desert, a fossil has been discovered of a curious insect, which was all shell. In the process of natural adaptation to its environment, it had, it is assumed, gone on hardening its shell—till it became all shell and life was extinguished. Man, during centuries of civilisation, has built up a unique institutional structure,—including a terrific war apparatus. He has to save himself from it—if he desires that the earth shall continue to be his abode." (P. 603)

If man is to save himself and get out of the round of construction and destruction to which he is so helplessly subject, he must realise the imperative need for a psychological change in himself as the first step towards a larger change. No doubt there are enough signs that there is, in the thinking section of mankind in most countries, an awakening to the call of this Necessity, but the requisite sincerity has not been quite pronounced and the will to respond to it is not yet quite effective.

Though primarily meant for University students, this book should be of interest and help to the general reader as well. Excellently got up, the volume is priced reasonably and should find a popular reception.

M. P. PANDIT

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